

**PATCH WHERE IT HURTS:
TOWARDS A “GLOBAL” DIDACTIC OF INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS
IN SPIRITUAL CARE AND COUNSELING**

**A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

**by
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May 2007

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This Dissertation, written by

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has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the
Claremont School of Theology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

PATCH WHERE IT HURTS: TOWARDS A “GLOCAL” DIDACTIC OF INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTERS IN SPIRITUAL CARE AND COUNSELING

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This dissertation develops a “glocal” didactic of interreligious encounters, a theory and method that assists clergy in institutions as well as religious communities to constructively engage the religious diversity within their contexts. The term “glocalization” is used in sociological discourse to describe the interconnections of global and local processes in a globalized society. A “glocal” didactic of interreligious encounters aims at the development of a “glocal” responsibility, an ethos that affirms one’s particular identity and at the same time affirms one’s interconnectedness with the religiously other in their particularity.

The “glocal” didactic is interdisciplinary and integrates research from the fields of sociology, theology, pastoral theology and social psychology into a theory and method of the facilitation of interreligious encounters. It provides (1) an understanding of the social context of religious diversity, (2) an articulation of a Christian theological approach to religious pluralism, (3) conceptual tools for the understanding of interreligious spiritual care relationships, and (4) and tools to constructively engage and overcome stereotypes in interreligious encounters.

The sociological concepts of hybridization, glocalization, and deterritorialization provide tools to understand cultural and religious diversity and the interconnection of global and local processes in a globalized society.

The “glocal” didactic is based on two theological guiding concepts that hold the universal and particular in a creative tension, one that understands religious identity in relationship and another that understands religious identity in cooperative, liberative practice.

Socio-cultural analysis and the paradigm of three concentric circles of interreligious encounters (common human experience, interconnected spiritual practice and particular spiritual practice) inform interreligious spiritual care.

Research from intergroup contact theory and social identity theory is applied to interreligious encounters. Various facilitating conditions for prejudice reduction as well as strategies of decategorization, cross-categorization, recategorization, and mutual differentiation, are utilized to articulate strategies for stereotype reduction in interreligious encounters. Insights from intergroup relations programs inform the consideration of the design and facilitation of such interreligious encounters in the training of chaplains and congregational clergy and in interreligious action projects.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for guidance and feedback for my dissertation from faculty at Claremont School of Theology, Stephen Kim, Kathleen Greider, William Clements, Elaine Walker, and Betty Clements. Michael Koppel, Gabriele Mayer, and Carol Bliss are good friends and colleagues. William Clements' continual pastoral support throughout my studies in Claremont and my supervisory training process has been a tremendous help.

I have learned most about the nature of interreligious encounters from my CPE students. Especially Sari Ateek, Elana Perry and Ellie Steinman have provided valuable feedback for Chapter 4.

My colleagues and supervisors at Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, Ellen Zaman, Mary Dee Hacker, and Sharon Chinn have been supportive, as I have juggled work responsibilities and research. Carrie Fisher offered encouragement, and Cheryl Lew's laptop served me well.

Seeds for this work were planted years ago during a year of ecumenical studies, which taught me to understand my faith in a wider global perspective. I am appreciative of this study opportunity that was provided by the World Council of Churches and for what I learned from my mentor Michael Kinnamon.

Most of all, Julie Porter has accompanied my work with much patience and understanding. I am so grateful to her.

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In memory of my father Herbert Grefe, and to my mother Magdalene Grefe.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Being a Christian pluralist means daring to encounter people of very different faith traditions and defining my faith not by its borders, but by its roots.¹

Problem

Working as a chaplain in different hospitals I had to incorporate a new task in my daily routine. I began to “patrol” the hospitals’ interfaith meditation rooms and clear them from traces of disrespect and harassment. Patients and families could pin written prayers on a board on the altar of the Lady of Guadalupe, a very important sacred symbol for Mexican Catholics. At times I would find and remove defaming messages about the Lady of Guadalupe that were left besides those prayers for healing and support. Other times I found tracts claiming that only faith in Jesus Christ can bring salvation. I also would re-supply sacred items of non-Christian religions, such as kippahs, prayer rugs and exemplars of the Qur’ān, because they disappeared from the chapel on a regular basis. In 2005 in the hospital chapel at the Medical Center of the University of California, Los Angeles, Muslim prayer rugs were found soaked in pig’s blood.² It seems that some persons are so disturbed that the interfaith meditation rooms are sanctuaries for persons of all faiths that they revert to property damage or harassment.

At the same time the interfaith meditation rooms *are* sanctuaries for all people. For instance, once I found a small meditation room filled with a Roman Catholic woman and her two children praying the rosary, a Muslim woman on the prayer rug turned

¹ Diana Eck, A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” Has Now Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001), 23.

² Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) Report 2005; accessed on September 5, 2006; available from <http://www.pluralism.org/research/profiles/display.php?profile=74090>.

toward Mecca to say her daily prayer and another person sitting in silence. They did not seem disturbed by the presence of the others, rather, in a time of crisis they shared a space that allowed all of them to practice their particular faiths for spiritual support. Another time, a Jewish chaplain intern met with a Latina evangelical grandmother of a patient in the interfaith chapel. Initially, the grandmother was hesitant to speak with a chaplain from a different religious tradition. Then she opened up and talked about her sadness and her faith with the chaplain, and both read some psalms together. Religious diversity presents challenges, can bring about conflict, but also provides opportunities for interconnections and solidarity.

In recent decades the religious landscape in the United States and Western Europe has undergone significant transformations. While Christianity has rooted and grown tremendously in the Southern hemisphere, immigration from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East has introduced diverse religions to European countries and the U.S.³ At the turn of the new millennium, more than 160 million people lived as migrants outside of their home country.⁴ In her book A New Religious America Diana Eck reviews the religious landscape as it has formed over the last decades in the United States and concludes that it has become the most religiously diverse nation on the earth.⁵ Perhaps most religious communities live in relative isolation from their religious neighbors, following the motto “live and let live.” Some Christians join Eck and embrace this new religious pluralism as “marbling” of civilizations, but many see in the closer contact of diverse cultures a “clash

³ Martin Forward, Inter-religious Dialogue: A Short Introduction (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2001), 64.

⁴ Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan, “Intergroup Relations Program Evaluation,” in On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport, ed. John F. Dovidio, Peter Glick, and Laurie A. Rudman (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 432.

⁵ Eck, New Religious America, 4.

of civilizations.”⁶ They see in the new religious diversity a threat to what they perceive as the Judeo-Christian foundation of Western culture.⁷ Those who are religiously different from the mainstream often face stereotypes and prejudice in expressions, such as “Sikh militant,” or associations of “fundamentalism,” “terrorism,” and “holy war” with the word Muslim.⁸

The increasing religious diversity can be felt in public institutions. In hospitals and other institutional settings, it is the role of chaplains to make spiritual support available to their religiously diverse patient population and staff. The responsibilities can range from helping the hospital meet dietary needs for different religious groups, by offering kosher and vegetarian meals, to recognizing different religious holidays and providing inclusive places and services for worship and meditation. Moreover, it includes spiritually supporting patients, families and staff whose beliefs and spiritual practices are different from their own. Chaplains need to understand careseekers’ distress as well as their resources and coping mechanisms in the context of the careseekers’ spiritual tradition and help them use those resources.

The increasing diversity is felt in cities and neighborhoods as well. Local churches find themselves in one neighborhood with a mosque, a synagogue, and a Hindu temple, for example. As citizens they participate in the life and challenges of their local community, such as homelessness, lack of educational resources and environmental problems, for example. Religious communities, thus, face the question whether to live as isolated neighbors or whether to form partnerships and develop connections to address

⁶ Eck, New Religious America, 4.

⁷ Eck, New Religious America, 25.

⁸ Eck, New Religious America, 303.

social problems together. Eck gives an example of interreligious cooperation between a United Methodist Church and a mosque of an Islamic society in Fremont, California. When both communities looked for a worship space and met as next-door neighbors, they joined hands in landscaping and planting. They share some of their facilities with each other and call the shared area the Peace Terrace.⁹

The Muslim-Christian Peace Terrace and the shared reading of psalms by a Jewish chaplain and an evangelical Latina are encouraging examples of bridge building, sprung up creatively in opportunities and challenges that presented themselves. This study asks how to be methodical about facilitating such interreligious contacts in providing care and counseling to people of diverse faith traditions so mutual relationships develop and religious prejudice can be overcome.

The increasingly religiously diverse social context has a lead to which practical theological reflection needs to catch up. The dialogue between representatives of different faiths takes place primarily on the academic level and in regional and local interfaith councils. Such bridge building involves primarily religious leaders, especially those who already bring an interest to interreligious relations. As religious diversity is experienced in neighborhoods and public organizations, interreligious encounters need to include not only academic and religious leadership elites but take place on a grassroots level, in local institutions and communities.

Diana Eck points out that still only few institutions equip their students to engage the religious diversity and this new context of ministry.¹⁰ While some theological

⁹ Eck, New Religious America, 351.

¹⁰ Eck, New Religious America, 22f.

schools have begun to include issues of religious diversity into their curriculum, it appears that in much of Christian theological education, non-Christian religious traditions have still a marginal place.¹¹ The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. (ACPE), a multicultural and multifaith organization providing education for ministry and pastoral care, has still to develop resources that help chaplains and ACPE supervisors to reflect on their spiritual care and supervision with persons of different religious traditions.¹² ACPE has been largely shaped by its origin within the Christian Protestant mainline context, but has made efforts to reach out to train chaplains and clinical supervisors from different faith traditions. The effort has not yet resulted in a systematic methodological reflection on how to address the religious diversity in curriculum, individual supervision, and group facilitation.

This dissertation responds to the gap of resources about the work of care and counseling with persons of diverse faith traditions. It develops tools for the facilitation of interreligious encounters in the context of care, counseling, and training in institutional and congregational settings. Examples of some of the practical guiding questions are as follows: How can an institutional chaplain offer spiritual counseling to a person in crisis who practices a faith very different from the chaplain's? Is there a theological meeting ground? How is the relationship affected by differences, stereotypes, and power dynamics? How can a pastor of a congregation assist her members to partner with a local mosque in a service project? What should the preparation look like? What are pitfalls to watch for and what conditions can be created that will make this educational and practical

¹¹ For the German context see Christoph Boechinger, "Interreligiöses Lernen in religionswissenschaftlicher Perspektive," *Praktische Theologie* 38, 2 (2003) : 86-96.

¹² Association for Clinical Pastoral Education; accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://www.acpe.edu>.

endeavor successful? What kind of group leadership can a supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education provide in a CPE group that consists of students from the U.S., Africa, representing the Jewish, Buddhist, and Christian traditions, for example, so that religious particularities are respected while a stereotype reduction and sense of community can be achieved?

A theory and method that enables chaplains and local clergy as well as theological educators to constructively engage the religious diversity of their institutions and communities needs to provide (1) an understanding of the social context of religious diversity, (2) an articulation of a Christian theological approach to religious pluralism, (3) conceptual tools for the understanding of interreligious spiritual care relationships, and (4) and tools to constructively engage and overcome stereotypes in interreligious encounters.

Thesis

A glocal didactic of interreligious encounters is a theory and method that aims at the development of a “glocal responsibility”, assists spiritual caregivers and theological educators to understand theological, social and intergroup dynamics at play in interreligious encounters and equips them to constructively facilitate such encounters in the context of their clinical practice.

Scope and Location

This study operates on the basis that theology is contextual and that clergy need to be aware of their own social context, their cultural and religious assumptions in order to effectively work with persons from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

I cannot approach this study from a neutral, quasi-objective stance. I am a woman, native of Germany, minister in the United Church of Christ, working in a religiously and culturally diverse inner city hospital in Los Angeles. I work as a CPE supervisor in an increasingly interreligious, but still largely Christian Protestant organization. The contexts of my education and clinical work are congregational ministry, spiritual care, and Clinical Pastoral Education in Germany and the U.S., which is reflected in much of the literature and the case examples addressed. My limitations lead me to seek the dialogue with those in other contexts rather than assuming an objective truth for all. Other important contributions for a didactic of interreligious encounters come from different contexts, such as Africa or Asia where practical experiences with interreligious diversity have been made for centuries. I have included voices from the Southern hemisphere contributing to a theological approach to religious pluralism. However, the interreligious relationships are shaped differently in Africa or Asia than in North America. The focus of this study is the social context of the North West, by which I mean the United States and Western Europe.¹³

The theological approaches to religious pluralism, to the relationship between the universal and the particular, look different for the Christian context, compared to a Muslim or Jewish context, for instance. The articulation of a theological foundation of a didactic for interreligious encounters, therefore, is developed for the Christian context, pursuing the goal to equip Christian clergy with tools to engage the religiously Other. The tools for the facilitation of interreligious encounters in individual and group settings,

¹³ Hereafter, I use the term North West to describe the cultural context of the U.S. and Western Europe, because it seems to be a more neutral terminology than “First World,” for example.

developed on the basis of intergroup contact theory, may be helpful for clinicians and clergy from diverse religious traditions.

The majority of concepts and case examples address the field of spiritual care in institutional chaplaincy and Clinical Pastoral Education, professional training for interfaith chaplaincy. However, implications for congregational clergy are also considered.

The dissertation does not provide simple recipes for chaplains and congregational pastors that they can easily apply to their work with patients and neighbors from different religious traditions. It rather develops a theological foundation and conceptual tools that help clergy to understand social dynamics at play in interreligious encounters and describes pathways how these dynamics can be facilitated constructively. Encounters between persons of different groups and denomination within the same faith tradition, such as evangelical and mainline Protestants, for example, are not focus of this study.

Remarks about the Review of the Literature

A global didactic of interreligious encounters is developed on the basis of an interdisciplinary inquiry, utilizing particular theories from the fields of theology, sociology, pastoral theology, and intergroup relations theory. I have not found a body of literature that draws on these disciplines and brings them into a conversation. Therefore, it seems most adequate to review the relevant literature of these fields in the context of the discussion of the theories and concepts that are utilized. Each chapter employs theories from a different discipline and opens with a review of the related pertinent

literature and research. At this point, a brief summary of the reviews shall depict the gap in the research this study attempts to address.

The studies in the field of religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue are dominated by theological and philosophical approaches and only marginally address practical implications. Liberationist and feminist approaches articulate some methodological considerations. However, social, intercultural and intergroup dynamics need to be considered for the effective facilitation of interreligious *encounters*.

Some sociologists have explored the role of religion in a globalized context. Their research is employed. The reflections of the theologian Robert Schreiter on globalization as the context for theology represent an interdisciplinary exercise at the cross section of sociology and theology and serve as a foundation for my investigation of sociological concepts that illuminate the globalized social context of religious pluralism.¹⁴

In the field of pastoral theology and care, the body of intercultural pastoral care and counseling has grown and will be utilized. Conceptualizations of interreligious spiritual care still need to be developed. Perhaps the lack of theories about interreligious spiritual care is partly rooted in a gap of cross-fertilization with the theology of religious pluralism. In Chapter 4 I will bring both fields into a dialogue.

Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity from the field of Intergroup Relations provide strategies to bring different groups into contact in a way that such encounters help to reduce prejudice. This research has been influential in policies of desegregation and multicultural education in the U.S. The research of Intergroup

¹⁴ Robert J. Schreiter, The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997).

Relations in the context of religion, however, is very limited. I will apply concepts from Intergroup Contact Theory and Social Identity Theory to interreligious encounters in the context of spiritual care, clinical supervision of spiritual care and congregational ministry.

The literature reviews in the different fields have resulted in the following needs assessment: In order for interreligious dialogue to reach to the grassroots and community level, theological reflection on religious pluralism needs to be enriched by an understanding of relationships between persons from different religious traditions. Research from sociology, intergroup relations, and pastoral theology contribute to such an understanding. On the other hand, in order for Christian clergy and communities to be open to engage the religiously Other, besides an understanding of social and intergroup dynamics, they need to find theological tools that help them understand their faith in the context of other religious traditions. This study attempts to address the gap of cross-fertilization between the disciplines and develops a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters on the basis of an interdisciplinary dialogue.

Method and Outline of the Argument

This study is an interdisciplinary exercise drawing on insights from different disciplines in order to weave them together in a theory and method for interreligious encounters in the context of ministry. I examine the promise and problems of interreligious encounters from the angles of different disciplines, sociology (Chapter 2), theology (Chapter 3), pastoral theology and care (Chapter 4), and social psychology

(Chapter 5). The perspectives of the different disciplines are integrated and implications for practice of ministry are addressed.

Clinical vignettes are used throughout to either focus problems and questions, or exemplify the usefulness of concepts developed in the literature for the context of ministry. They have a primarily illustrating function and demonstrate practical applications.

Chapter 2 places the interreligious encounters in a wider context of globalization. Drawing on insights from the field of sociology I delineate cultural aspects of globalization and investigate different religious responses to the context of globalization. In particular, the notions of hybridization and glocalization provide conceptual tools to understand cultural and religious diversity and the interconnection of global and local processes in a globalized society. The concept of deterritorialization explains the experience of cultural fragmentation and the fear and resistance many contemporaries experience with regard to religious diversity. A “glocal” didactic is a methodological innovation I propose for this study, which aims at the development of a “glocal” responsibility as a religious approach to the globalized context, an attitude that affirms one's particular identity and at the same time affirms one's interconnectedness with the religiously other in their particularity. A “glocal” responsibility thus is an attitude that holds both universal and particular values in a creative tension.

An exploration of social and psychological dynamics goes hand in hand with the development of a theological foundation of values and concepts motivating and shaping interreligious encounters. Therefore, chapter 3 analyzes theological theories of interreligious dialogue and their methodological implications for the facilitation of

interreligious encounters. I put forth my own approach of a practical theology of interreligious encounters. I understand “practical theology” not as applied theology but as theological reflection focused on praxis. By “practical theology of interreligious encounters” I mean theological reflection that relates Christian teachings to the contemporary situation and experience of a globalized and pluralistic social context and envisions Christian action and praxis in such context.¹⁵ I base my approach on two theological bases. (1) In a pluralistic context the particular symbols of the realm of God, of Christ, and of the Trinity empower and call Christians to an open encounter with the religiously Other. (2) These particular symbols call Christians to work together with persons of diverse traditions to tend to the suffering of individuals, in the global as well as in local communities and in interreligious relationships.

Chapter 4 considers interreligious encounters in the spiritual care relationship. It utilizes in particular the method of socio-cultural analysis from the field of intercultural pastoral care and counseling. The model of three concentric circles (common human experience, shared spiritual practice and particular spiritual practice) illuminates how a glocal responsibility and both universal and particular values inform the practice of interreligious spiritual care and how spiritual care givers learn experientially about other religious traditions through their contact with the religiously Other.

Chapter 5 draws on insights from social psychology. Research from intergroup contact theory and social identity theory provide tools and strategies for stereotype reduction in encounters between in-groups and out-groups. Allport’s and Pettigrew’s facilitating conditions for prejudice reduction (institutional support, equal status,

¹⁵ Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research (London: SCM Press, 2006), 5,17,24.

superordinate goals, cooperation, and friendship potential), as well as strategies of decategorization, cross-categorization, recategorization, and mutual differentiation, are applied to articulate strategies for stereotype reduction in interreligious encounters in spiritual care and its clinical supervision, as well as in shared projects of different local religious communities.

Chapter 6 employs insights from intergroup relations programs for the design and facilitation of such interreligious encounters in such settings and integrates results from the previous chapters into guidelines for a glocal didactic. The study is concluded with recommendations for further research at the cross-section of theology and social psychology of an exploration how theologies of interreligious engagement and cooperation can be utilized for the reduction of religious prejudice.

Definitions

In this section some terms are introduced that are used throughout the study. Other terms are defined in the context of the discussion of the research in which they emerge and are introduced at the beginning of the chapters.

Glocal Didactic

The term “glocal” has been appropriated by Roland Robertson from the economic to the sociological discourse and describes the interrelationship of the global and the local, the universal and the particular. Both interpenetrate each other, and one cannot be properly understood without the other.¹⁶ John Tomlinson builds on Robertson’s

¹⁶ Roland Robertson, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 100.

terminology and coins the term “ethical glocalism,” which signifies an attitude that allows person to “live in both the global and the local at the same time,” a willingness to engage the Other.¹⁷ Applied to the context of interreligious encounters the term “glocal” describes an attitude which affirms the interconnectedness and commonalities with the religiously Other as well as differences and particularities of different religious identities.

The term “glocal didactic” is inspired by Ernst Lange’s proposal of a social ecumenical didactic, a theory and method, which makes it possible for persons to develop an ecumenical and universal commitment and to participate in experiences with others while maintaining their commitments to their denominational, cultural, and social context.¹⁸ The term didactic describes content, theological concepts, as well as learning processes that assist persons to develop a “glocal responsibility”, a commitment to engage the religiously Other in recognition of commonalities, support of their own values and simultaneous affirmation of one’s own particular values.

Interreligious Encounter

The term “interfaith dialogue” is limited because it stresses more the doctrinal than the cultural aspects of religions. Religion is the bond of kinship, binding persons to a community or to God and might not accurately capture Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism.¹⁹ The term “interreligious” has different connotations in different contexts.

¹⁷ John Tomlinson, Globalization and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 183.

¹⁸ Ulrich Becker, “Ecumenical Learning,” in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. Nicholas Lossky, José Miguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Pauline Webb (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 342.

¹⁹ In Eastern traditions the word dharma might express the concerns of the word religion but also means social structure, right order, ethics, and ritual obligation. Diana L. Eck and Devaki Jain, eds.,

While Asian theologians use the term “interreligious dialogue” to describe the dialogue between different well established religions, Latin Americans use the term “macro-ecumenismo” for the same phenomenon. “Dialogo interreligioso” describes the dialogue between Catholicism and the indigenous religions. In Africa the term “interreligious dialogue” refers to relations between the mainstream churches and independent indigenous churches. In Europe “interreligious dialogue” has included atheism and secularization but because of increased immigration now develops more inter-cultural tones.²⁰ In spite of its limitations, the term “interreligious” seems most inclusive. I use the term “interreligious encounters” to describe the contact between persons with a commitment to different spiritual communities and traditions. The term “encounter” expresses better than “dialogue” that the educational method aimed for addresses cognitive as well as emotional, social, spiritual and cultural dimensions of the person.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a form of theological education that emphasizes experiential learning and takes place in clinical settings.²¹ CPE is offered in health care institutions and hospices, prisons, psychiatric and community care facilities, geriatric and rehabilitation centers and congregational settings. Experiential learning occurs in a circle of action and reflection. Clinical practice is reflected with supervisors

Introduction to Speaking of Faith: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women, Religion and Social Change (London: Women’s Press, 1986), 3.

²⁰ Joseph Esterman, “Inter-Faith Dialogue and the Option for the Poor: Some Methodological Remarks,” Voices From the Third World 25, nos. 1-2 (2002) : 21f, 24.

²¹ Association for Clinical Pastoral Education; accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://www.acpe.edu>.

and peers. The format of a CPE curriculum can differ according to the ACPE center. A core learning tool

of most ACPE centers is the verbatim, a word-for-word account of a particular spiritual care encounter, which is presented to peers and supervisor for feedback and reflection.

Interreligious Action Projects

I use this term to describe social action projects of communities from different religious traditions. Examples are projects conducted by the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) with youth from different religious traditions. Participants meet on weekends to participate in project with Habitat for Humanity, environmental tasks, such as cleaning up riverbanks, and helping seniors de-clutter their homes to prevent evictions.²² Social action projects represent a basis where youth from different religious traditions come together and develop relationships with each other. I imagine similar projects that can be developed in religious community partnerships, where members of local churches cooperate with members of other religious communities to tend to a social problem of their local neighborhood. The idea of interreligious action projects is introduced in the third chapter and further developed in the sixth chapter.

The Metaphors of Patch and Patchwork Quilt

A metaphor is limited when it comes to accurately defining a notion, yet it can capture and evoke a variety of aspects. Images of the “mosaic” and the “patchwork quilt”

²² Phone conversation with Mike Goggin, Assistant Director of the IFC, 5 September, 2006.

have taken the place of an older metaphor of the “melting pot” when describing cultural pluralism in the U.S., as they more accurately express the affirmation of cultural difference.²³ Throughout the study I will use the metaphor of the “patchwork quilt” to describe interreligious relationships.

Diana Eck employs the image of the “symphony” to describe the tasks of religiously pluralistic society, with different instruments playing together a shared script, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution. She compares interreligious relationships with the sound of jazz music where not all notes are written out ahead of time, and collaboration and invention among players is required.²⁴ The image of the symphony suggests that all participants follow a shared script of music and thus places less emphasis on particular identities, differences, and at times disconnections and disharmonies between religious traditions. Paul Knitter uses the image of a “dialogical community among communities,” as exemplified in the World Parliament of Religions where representatives of different religious communities throughout the world have practiced to talk and listen to each other.²⁵ The limitation of the image of the dialogical community is its confinement to religious and academic leaders and those who already bring openness to interreligious encounters.

²³ Donald M. Taylor and Fathali M. Moghaddam, Theories of Intergroup Relations: International Social Psychological Perspectives, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 189; Biren (Ratnesh) Nagda and Amelia Seraphia Derr, “Intergroup Dialogue: Embracing Difference, and Conflict, Engendering Community,” in Education Programs for Improving Intergroup Relations: Theory, Research, and Practice, ed. Walter G. Stephan and W. Paul Vogt, Multicultural Education Series (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), 136.

²⁴ Eck, New Religious America, 58.

²⁵ Paul Knitter, Introducing Theologies of Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 8.

A patch has different connotations.²⁶ It is a piece that covers a tear or strengthens a weak spot or a dressing applied to a wound or a sore. Chapters 2 and 3 relate interreligious encounters to the context of the wounds of the human community on a global scale that are experienced locally: growing poverty and increasing gaps between the rich and the poor, oppression because of race, ethnicity, or gender, armed conflict, and the threatened environment. Interreligious initiatives have formed to work together to apply dressings, to do repair work on the tears and holes of these issues of suffering. Chapter 2 explores the context of that suffering, the globalized world with its effects on the local level. Chapter 3 looks at different approaches based on the insight that numerous global problems are so complex that only by working together different religious communities can make a difference.

Chapter 4 relates interreligious encounters to the context of suffering of individuals. Wounds are experienced in personal lives, when persons are suffering from critical or chronic illness or face the death of a loved one, for example. Many institutions, such as hospitals, bring people of different cultures and religions together in a small space. Persons in these contexts often experience what is less common outside: facing suffering together, persons of different faiths often can get along, and religious differences are not barriers.

Wounds and sores are also found in interreligious relations themselves. Prejudice and ignorance keep people apart and cause oppression and pain. Chapter 5 looks at ways how to apply dressings to heal the wounds in interreligious relations and overcome religious prejudice.

²⁶ The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, 2nd. ed., s.v. "patch."

The image of the patchwork quilt is limited in that it does not accurately express the dynamic processes and interconnections of interreligious interactions. Nonetheless, the image of the patchwork is used here to describe the cooperation of communities and individuals from different religions tackling together suffering on an individual, communal, and global level. At the same time it affirms the particularities, differences, irregularities of the different traditions and resists the temptation to blur boundaries, soak up differences in one grand narrative or for the more powerful entity to appropriate entities with less power and voice. The connotation of the hodgepodge and jumble is embraced: As this study searches for a method to facilitate and manage constructively interreligious encounters, it also recognizes and seeks to accept its ambiguities and messiness.

A multitude of patches put together is a patchwork quilt consisting of irregular and incongruous pieces. Interreligious work is to a large degree patchwork. Mutuality and interconnections of interreligious encounters can be expressed in the image of the communal process of quilting.

The image of the patchwork quilt is pragmatic and down to earth, as there is no one overarching theory, no universal theory of religion but many different local patches of interreligious cooperation to address global problems. It describes the work of healing and repair unassumingly as applying patches that strengthen the healing process in individual lives and communities. The repair work of interreligious cooperation may be patchy, but any small step of healing in interreligious relations is a patch of hope that matters.

CHAPTER 2

Patching Up Tears in the Global Fabric - Religion in the Global Context

Introduction

The church board members of a Protestant Inner City Church in Germany discuss the call for prayer of the local mosque in the same part of town. The call for prayer sounds daily via loudspeaker in Arabic. Some board members express their annoyance, even anger, at the daily calls to Muslim prayer. They feel a sense of foreign infiltration. The strange sounds in a different language, from a different culture, signs of devotion to a different and strange religion practiced right next door seem so much louder to their ears than the bells of their church steeple. During the meeting the board decides that the parish needs to “show color” and express its own faith identification more assertively. The board decides to raise money to place a large cross on the wall of the modern inconspicuous church building that blends into other buildings in its neighborhood.

The church board obviously understands its dilemma as a theological issue. A pastoral theological reflection on this vignette considers theological, as well as social and cultural dynamics at work in the situation. Financial losses forced the parish to sell one of its buildings. The buyer turned out to be a Turkish community who turned the building into the local mosque. One of the ministers of the parish is the larger Church Association’s Representative for Islam. She initiated a partnership with the local mosque and personally knows some of the leaders of the local mosque well. The partnership with the mosque is primarily personified by the minister without a buy-in from the congregation or board members. In the context of this chapter social and cultural factors

are more significant: Because of a trend of secularization in many European societies, this inner city parish in Germany decreases in membership. The parish is located in a relatively poor neighborhood that is inhabited by a majority of migrants from South and Eastern Europe, North Africa, and primarily Turkey. The German citizens who live in the neighborhood are to a large degree unemployed, social welfare recipients, and senior citizens who have lived in the city district for many decades. The integration of migrants and German citizens has been poor; the parishioners are concerned because their children learn in schools in which the majority of children do not speak German well. Overall, the unemployment rate in Germany is increasing and populist opinions that “foreigners take away jobs from Germans” are not uncommon among citizens in the neighborhood.

Although they are not consciously addressed by the church board members, these social and cultural dynamics make up the context and influence the decision of the board. The matter at hand seems to be one of different beliefs and of the expression of the beliefs through a particular symbol (cross) or a particular symbolic action (call to prayer). The case example illustrates the need to explore not only the explicit theological factors of interreligious encounters but also implicit interpersonal, cultural and social dynamics in order to understand such encounters more fully and in order to address its issues more effectively.

This chapter explores the social context, in which interreligious encounters occur, namely the context of globalization. Before I discuss different theological approaches toward religious pluralism (Chapter 3), I investigate globalization as its environment. A working definition of globalization and exploration of some major cultural characteristics

of our experience of globalization is followed by an investigation of a possible role of religion in a globalized world.

Review of Relevant Literature

In his book The New Catholicity the theologian Robert Schreiter explores globalization as the context of contemporary Christian theology. The first chapter about “globalization and the contexts of theology” describes aspects of globalization and the role of theology in a globalized world. The body of literature about globalization in sociology is large, and I have used Schreiter’s exploration as a foundation for my research. In particular I have reviewed the sociological literature tracing selected issues with relevance for the development of a “glocal” didactic of interreligious encounters: the global and the local, hybridization and deterritorialization, and global theological flows.¹

The “dean of the scholarship on globalization,” as Roland Robertson is called by Max Stackhouse, has developed a prominent concept of the dynamics of globalization in Globalization. Social Theory and Global Culture.² I will discuss in more detail his concept as well as a recent review of a general consensus on the understanding of globalization as represented by cultural anthropologist Jan Nederveen Pieterse.³ The

¹ Schreiter, 12, 15-21, 26.

² Max L. Stackhouse, “General Introduction,” in Religion and the Powers of the Common Life, vol. 1 of God and Globalization, ed. Max L. Stackhouse and Peter J. Paris, (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000), 21.

³ Roland Robertson, Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture (London: Sage Publications, 1992); Roland Robertson, “Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept,” in Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990); Roland Robertson, “Globalization and the Future of ‘Traditional Religion,’” in Religion and the Powers of the Common Life, vol. 1 of God and Globalization, ed. Max L. Stackhouse and Peter J. Paris, 53-68 (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2000); Peter F. Beyer, Religion and Globalization. Theory, Culture and Society (London: Sage Publications, 1994); Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 9-13.

latter also provides an extensive investigation of the hybridization of cultures and is discussed below.⁴ Another concept frequently discussed in the literature on globalization is deterritorialization and is addressed in detail by John Tomlinson.⁵ Roland Robertson has coined the term glocalization to describe the dynamic interplay of global and local processes.⁶ His concept will be discussed further and complemented with Tomlinson's idea of ethical glocalism.

Peter Beyer explores the role of religion in a globalized world and distinguishes between two major trends, an ecumenical and a particularistic response.⁷ Schreiter has taken up Beyer's concept of religious social movements and further developed it in his concept of global theological flows. Beyer's and Schreiter's concepts are further discussed as they can shed light on the role of interreligious relationships in the global

An overview of different theories of "world culture" can be found in Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, World Culture: Origins and Consequences (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005).

⁴ John Tomlinson, Globalization and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 141-49, provides a discussion of concepts of hybridization. See also Néstor García Canclini, Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Sylvia L. López (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) for the context of Latin America. For reasons of concentration his concept will not be addressed.

⁵ Tomlinson, 107-49. The concept is also employed for example by Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization. Public Worlds Series, v.1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 37ff; John B. Thompson, The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 197ff describes the phenomenon with regard to mass communication and media as delocalization. I employ Tomlinson's discussion.

⁶ Some anthropologists use the term creolization for "glocalization." Lechner and Boli, 151f. and 56 (Table 2.1).

⁷ Beyer, Religion and Globalization; and, "Privatization and the Public Influence of Religion in Global Society," in Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization, and Modernity, ed. Mike Featherstone, 373-96 (London: Sage Publications, 1990). With regard to the particularistic response, the growth of fundamentalism as a response to homogenizing processes in globalization is discussed also: Martin E. Marty and Scott Appleby, eds. Religion, Ethnicity and Self-Identity: Nations in Turmoil (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997); M. P. Joseph, "Religious Fundamentalism: A Political Strategy for Global Governance?" Voices from the Third World 25, nos.1-2 (2002) : 151-62.

context. An example of an interreligious global flow is explored in the efforts of a formulation of a global ethic under leadership of Roman Catholic theologian Hans Küng.⁸ The theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether looks at the potential of different religions to contribute to a just and sustainable world and presents another example of a global theological or religious flow.⁹

Working Definition and Characteristics of Globalization

Working Definition

Although the discussion about globalization is a few decades old, it is difficult to define the term, because it still generates more controversy than consensus.¹⁰ The term “globalization” is commonly used synonymously with “corporate globalism” to describe the economic developments of the rise of free market capitalism to global proportions. The rise of neoliberal capitalism is a significant concern and challenges a religious response.¹¹ In addition, the dimensions of globalization are also of ecological, political, social, and cultural nature. Thus, the issue of globalization requires a multidimensional approach and it is difficult to find a definition that accurately describes the phenomenon. Economic, ecological, and social aspects are complex dimensions of a globalized context

⁸ Hans Küng and Karl-Josef Kuschel, A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions (New York: Continuum Publishing, 1993); Hans Küng and Helmut Schmidt, A Global Ethic and Global Responsibilities: Two Declarations (London: SCM Press, 1998).

⁹ Rosemary Radford Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism: Globalization, and World Religions (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005). See the chap., “The Greening of World Religions,” 45-89.

¹⁰ Nederveen Pieterse, 7.

¹¹ For an analysis of economic issues of globalization from a Christian social ethics perspective see Rebecca Todd Peters, In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization (New York: Continuum, 2004).

which are ever-present and exert their influence. They are tangents of relevance for a didactic of interreligious encounters. However, it would go beyond the scope of this study to try to address all of them. This chapter concentrates on the cultural aspects of globalization as they make up the context in which interreligious encounters occur.

Roland Robertson, defines globalization as the world being one “compressed single space.”¹² Other terms describing the phenomenon are “complex connectivity,”¹³ “global village” describing the technological revolution linking parts all over the world closer in time and space, and “global neighborhood.”¹⁴ Robertson dates globalization back to the early 15th century in Europe when heliocentric theory, an expanded geography and the spread of the Gregorian calendar formed a unified framework of understanding the world and increasingly national communities developed.¹⁵ The cultural anthropologist Nederveen Pieterse, however, understands the widely made equation of globalization and modernity as a eurocentric perspective.¹⁶ He contributes a historical and anthropological perspective to the discussion and defines globalization as a “long-term historical process of growing worldwide interconnectedness.”¹⁷ Nederveen Pieterse describes contemporary globalization as a “deep historical process.”¹⁸ While intercultural contact and mixing are accelerated in today’s world, we know of ancient population movements, cross-cultural

¹² Robertson, Globalization, 8.

¹³ Tomlinson, 2.

¹⁴ Commission on Global Governance, Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 41.

¹⁵ Robertson, Globalization, 58f.

¹⁶ Nederveen Pieterse, 25.

¹⁷ Nederveen Pieterse, 17.

¹⁸ Nederveen Pieterse, 24, 26.

trade and wanderings that spread world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam and allowed them to mutually influence each other. He concludes that “fundamental connectedness” across time and space is part of the human condition.¹⁹ In the light of the “collective history of forgotten migrations” globalization appears as an acceleration of an old phenomenon.²⁰

In the section on hybridization his views will be considered in more detail, but perhaps a *working definition and description of globalization* can be constructed from the following statements:²¹ (1) The term “globalization” describes the process by which the world has become single compressed space, and by which we experience it as such much more than ever before. (2) Technological change has hastened intercultural connection of people, goods, and information. (3) Globalization is multidimensional. (4) It involves the reconfiguration of states (for example, the European Union) and goes together with regionalization (free market zones and security alliances). (5) Economic benefits of globalization are concentrated in North America, Europe and Asia. Globally, wealth and income are distributed in extremely unequal terms. Globalization is a deeply uneven process, along the North-South divide and within societies along the widening social divides between the rich and the poor, with roughly twenty percent benefiting from global capitalism while the remaining eighty percent are driven deeper into poverty.²²

¹⁹ Nederveen Pieterse, 25.

²⁰ Nederveen Pieterse, 26.

²¹ These statements are concluded from definitions listed above and follow a minimal consensus as introduced by Nederveen Pieterse, 9ff.

²² Schreier, 7. In 1994 the income of the top twenty percent of the population was seventy-eight times the income of the bottom twenty percent while only in 1960 it was thirty times as much. Nederveen Pieterse, 13.

Characteristics of Globalization

For Robertson, the term globalization does not only signify the processes described above but also the consciousness of them. Not only is the world more compressed to a single space, but also we *experience* it as such more clearly.²³ The world has moved closer together and the dynamic of thickening interdependence is multidimensional. Perhaps this issue becomes most obvious when considering the dependence of all on the earth. Ecological issues such as the exploitation of the earth's resources and global warming, for example, clearly demonstrate that the fate of the global community is one and the actions of one part of the world tremendously impact the whole. Economically, nation states have lost regulatory power with regard market forces and fiscal crises have led to cutbacks in government spending.²⁴ The market system is driven by a consumerist ethos, which endangers the sustainability of resources and widens the gap between the rich and the poor – not only between regions of the world but also within nation states and societies. Air travel, information technology, as well as “cultural” goods, such as fashion, foods, music, and films create a large cultural context, dominated by those with economic power.²⁵ The term “McDonaldization” describes a process of homogenization of the world based on a power asymmetry of globalization processes.²⁶ While differences between cultures remain, there is a felt sense that local and indigenous traditions are being overpowered by homogenizing processes, which in turn

²³ Robertson, Globalization, 8.

²⁴ Nederveen Pieterse, 11.

²⁵ Tomlinson, 89ff.

²⁶ George Ritzer, The McDonaldization of Society, rev. New Century ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, 2004), 160, describes McDonaldization as one of a number of globalization processes.

leads to an assertion of local and particular identities.²⁷ Trends of globalization from above (market, states, institutions, and the momentum of technology) are countered by movements of and globalization from below (social movements, citizen's associations, informal networks, the momentum of religious movements).²⁸

Migration to Europe and the U.S. has created increasingly multicultural societies and brings people closely together in urban neighborhoods who have different traditions, values, and beliefs. As the UN report Our Global Neighborhood states, "Never before have so many people had so much in common, but never before have the things that divide them been so obvious."²⁹ The following sections will take a closer look at specific aspects of globalization and culture: cultural mixing or hybridization, deterritorialization, and the dialectic relationship of global and local.

Hybridization. As people from different parts of the world are in closer contact than ever before, and religious beliefs and practices are intertwined with cultural world views and patterns, it is important to conceptualize the relationship of different cultures. Nederveen Pieterse describes three paradigms of cultural difference. He contrasts his concept of cultural mixing to cultural differentialism on the one hand, and cultural convergence on the other hand.

Cultural differentialism is concerned with boundaries between cultures and emphasizes language, territory, or biology as "destiny."³⁰ Cultures are understood not as

²⁷ Tomlinson, 69.

²⁸ Richard Falk, Religion and Human Global Governance (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 120.

²⁹ Commission on Global Governance, 41.

³⁰ Nederveen Pieterse, 47.

fluid, but consisting of fixed pieces and blocks. Cultural differentialism may emphasize local empowerment, often asserting the local by ignoring the connections between the local and the global. A pronounced position can be found in Samuel Huntington's concept of the clash of civilizations according to which cultural differences are seen as generating conflict and rivalry.³¹ He predicts that conflict between different civilizations will be more frequent, more sustained and more violent.³² On the backdrop of the end of the cold war and a decline of ideology he sees the world divided in civilizations which are basic cultural entities. He states that the "paramount axis of world politics will be the relations between 'the West and the Rest'" and sees the conflict play out particularly with Islam.³³

Nederveen Pieterse points out that the division of the world into civilizations is superseded by new historiography.³⁴ Yet Huntington's idea has become a popular and influential phrase in the political discussion. Cultural differentialism is concerned with boundaries, with national and cultural purity. Its understanding of multiculturalism imagines a society of closure and separation, as those who are different are kept at a safe distance.³⁵

The paradigm of cultural convergence can be identified in the many economic and cultural tendencies of homogenization. In terms of a multicultural society, a culturally

³¹ Nederveen Pieterse, 42, 47.

³² Samuel P. Huntington, The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 48.

³³ Huntington, 31-32, 48.

³⁴ Nederveen Pieterse, 43.

³⁵ Nederveen Pieterse, 56.

diverse world, the concept of cultural convergence is related to the idea of assimilation, with the dominant group at the center.³⁶ Because of the dominance of the English language, cultural goods and icons, such as Microsoft, Levis, Coca Cola, terms such as “Coca-Colonization” or “McDonaldization” of the world have been coined.³⁷ These terms express that homogeneous ways of organizing social life have been exported from the United States throughout the world and create a consumerist mega culture with the power to choke particular cultural and local expressions.³⁸ Global media concentration in a few companies fosters a climate in which the values of corporate capitalism along with its consumerism shape ways of thinking and values throughout the world. These processes have an inherent power imbalance.³⁹ A number of concepts of homogenization see the global culture as an expression of Western hegemony that overwhelms and threatens less powerful, or modern culture dominating traditional cultures. Tomlinson points out that an understanding of these dynamics only as expansion of western power and cultural hegemony does not do justice to the complex economic connectivity. At the same time he emphasizes the “manifest unevenness of globalization processes”:

Globalization is a very asymmetrical process from which some benefit while many others lose out.⁴⁰

³⁶ Nederveen Pieterse, 56.

³⁷ Tomlinson, 83.

³⁸ Ritzer, 163, 165.

³⁹ John B. Thompson, The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 163.

⁴⁰ Tomlinson, 94, 97.

Some sociologists, while acknowledging the threat of a capitalist monoculture, express caution with regard to the use of the concept of homogenization. Roland Robertson has brought the term “glocalization” into the discussion of globalization in order to express the dialectic of the local and the global, the particular and the universal.⁴¹ He applies the term “glocalization” to sociology from its origin in the economic discourse.⁴² A number of sociologists point out that the market becomes more diversified, and capitalism brings about hybrid products. At the same time there is no doubt about the homogenization of goods and culture to a significant degree.

In contrast to the concepts of cultural differentialism and cultural convergence, Nederveen Pieterse puts forth the paradigm of hybridization. The term from the area of biology applied to culture means cultural mixing. Similar notions are “syncretism,” “creolization” and “crossover,” for example.⁴³ Because of migration, trade, and wanderings of different ancient populations, who mixed and influenced each other, cultures have been hybrid all along. Culture is always changing, fluid, never in a pure original state. Therefore, contemporary globalization means an accelerated hybridization of already hybrid cultures.⁴⁴ According to Nederveen Pieterse, hybridization is a paradigm that acknowledges the existence of the half-caste and the mixed-breed and subverts ethnic or national claims to purity and neat separation.⁴⁵ Hybridization

⁴¹ See the section below in this chapter on the global and the local.

⁴² It is a translation of the Japanese word *dochakuka*, describing a micro-marketing strategy. In order to be successful in selling products globally, strategies of tailoring and advertising products to particular and local markets need to be adapted. Robertson, *Globalization*, 173; Nederveen Pieterse, 50.

⁴³ Nederveen Pieterse, 53.

⁴⁴ Nederveen Pieterse, 82; Tomlinson, 144.

⁴⁵ Nederveen Pieterse, 52f.

emphasizes the mixing of cultures not their separateness. Because culture is not primarily understood as bound to a certain place or nation but as “human software,”⁴⁶ there is the possibility of multiple identities and “transcultural compatibility.”⁴⁷ For example, a multicultural urban area in Los Angeles in numerous regards may have more similarities with London, Paris, or Buenos Aires than with a smaller homogeneous city in the US.

The understanding of culture as fluid and open seems to be most appropriate for the context of globalization. Culture is not confined to historical and territorial boundaries, but is always open and fluid.⁴⁸ Culture, understood as “human software” is not without a space but outward looking.⁴⁹ It refers to commonality as well as diversity.⁵⁰

Nederveen Pieterse’s contribution lies in the enthusiasm with which he embraces and celebrates the fluidity, the constant transformation and hybridity of culture. He also gives a voice to the experience of persons who embody hybridization, migrants and as he calls them, “mixed-breeds.” Nederveen Pieterse underscores the deep historical roots of migrations, their economic and cultural contributions. He demythologizes the idea of the nation state as a late phenomenon and a structure that is superimposed on the experience of human migrations. Thus, he provides conceptual tools for a paradigm shift that may help contemporaries to accept and embrace cultural and religious difference and diversity. In other words, the shift from an understanding of culture as fixed, static, and bound to a particular territory to an understanding of culture as changing with permeable

⁴⁶ Nederveen Pieterse, 78.

⁴⁷ Nederveen Pieterse, 78.

⁴⁸ Nederveen Pieterse, 46.

⁴⁹ Nederveen Pieterse, 78.

⁵⁰ Nederveen Pieterse, 46.

boundaries, may help persons to open their minds to the increasing cultural diversity in their cities and environments. This paradigm shift may also help to conceptualize the relationship of different religions as less static and more open.

However, the enthusiastic endorsement of hybridization does not account for the cultural uncertainty and fragmentation many contemporaries feel who cling to nationalist and religiously fundamentalist ideologies. Does the celebration of the “crisscross and crossover, the cut’n’mix” give room for a sense of homelessness and alienation which often is part of the experience of migrants, some of whom had to migrate because of political or economic pressure and not of their own choice?⁵¹ Perhaps Huntington’s idea of the “clash of civilizations” has become popular, because it captures - and reinforces - fears of the messiness of a multicultural society. An attempt to help persons to embrace cultural and religious diversity of their environment more openly must take seriously the fears that keep them from doing so. A theoretical framework to address fragmentation, alienation, and cultural uncertainty can be found in the notion of deterritorialization.

Deterritorialization – Loss of Sense of Place. As pointed out above, cultures incorporate elements from other foreign cultures and are fluid and interactive. On the one hand, they are human software with transcultural compatibility, on the other hand, cultural identity *is* linked to the local place. Landscape and environment, the food grown in a particular place, its dialects and customs have formed identities and cultural symbols of its inhabitants. However, the fluidity and mobility of culture has been accelerated with globalization to a degree that the local place has less and less significance for persons’

⁵¹ Nederveen Pieterse, 72.

sense of identity. Everyday life becomes “de-localized.”⁵² Tomlinson compares places of organic interaction creating a sense of memory and identity, such as a market place or a local coffee house with so-called non-places of shopping malls and service stations.⁵³ Certainly, these become places of identity for those who work there, but for the majority of visitors these places represent a sense of impermanence and anonymity. The comparison of a local center of a community with local small shops and a farmer’s market with the shopping mall with chain stores controlled by corporate headquarters illustrates how local interests and forces have less influence on shaping local life. A sense of being “at home,” of familiarity is obtained from particular and unique local places less than it used to.⁵⁴

Deterritorialization can also mean “abstraction” of experience from our physical local place.⁵⁵ For example, food as a part of cultural identity has undergone transformations. In the North Western hemisphere, foods from all over the world are available all year round. They are consumed abstracted from their local origin and circumstances of growth and harvest. Most consumers in the North West buying a cup of coffee on their way to work are unaware of the worker who harvests the coffee beans for too little wage, unable to provide even a small percentage of our food consumption to his or her family. Tourists visiting a beach resort in Sri Lanka are far away from experiencing the life of the countries’ citizens or a real sense of that place. Another form

⁵² Thompson describes delocalization experienced through mass communication and mass media, 197ff.

⁵³ Tomlinson takes up the notion of the non-place that has been developed by French anthropologist Marc Augé.

⁵⁴ Tomlinson, 106-08.

⁵⁵ Tomlinson, 121.

of abstraction is the increase of virtual experience. Through global media and the Internet, what we hear and see is less dependent on the physical place.⁵⁶ Internet chat rooms and online education are other examples of abstraction of our experience from the physical place.

Another form of deterritorialization is “dis-placement” as experienced by many directly in the form of labor migration.⁵⁷ They are literally dis-placed as they have to leave their local home in the countryside in order to seek work in the city. Economic and political reasons dis-place many people throughout the world. Multiculturalism in Europe and the United States was stimulated by postwar labor migration and asylum for those fleeing political oppression and brought people together in one city or neighborhood who have different customs, traditions, and beliefs. Working class members of a community in the U.S. and Europe may experience the dis-placing effects of globalization when they become unemployed because the manufacturing of products is outsourced to another country with low wages and taxes. Or they experience the transformation of familiar place when their neighborhood slowly changes into a multi-ethnic environment.⁵⁸

These different developments of deterritorialization do not necessarily mean an end to local culture, but the cultural space is more complex.⁵⁹ Some experience the cultural diversity of their urban home as an enriching opportunity. For others this transformation is experienced as problematic: As familiarity is no longer drawn from the

⁵⁶ Thompson, 175.

⁵⁷ The terms “displacement” and “disembedding” are used by the sociologist Giddens. Anthony Giddens and Christopher Pierson, Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998), 98; Tomlinson, 106.

⁵⁸ Tomlinson, 133.

⁵⁹ Tomlinson, 149.

local place, many people experience a sense of cultural uncertainty and fragmentation. The global changes the local, and some communities meet that challenge by retreating and tying themselves even more closely to their particular identities, nation, ethnicity, or religion. As national borders erode, ethnic or religious boundaries may emerge in their place. As the theologian Robert Schreiter states, boundaries are today not as much boundaries of territory but boundaries of difference.⁶⁰ This may mean that people in order to gain a sense of cultural belonging and certainty rely less on identification of territory but on identification with a particular group. The belonging to an in-group, which is asserted over and against other groups, bestows a sense of identity. Chapter 4 addresses in more detail intergroup relations and social identity. Social identity is part of an individual's concept of self that is derived from their membership of a social group which is often maintained by disassociation from out-groups.⁶¹ It can be argued that the economic and psychological pressures of deterritorialization reinforce the tendency to gain a sense of identity by emphasizing group boundaries. In other words, the belonging to a particular religious group can be a powerful source of identity in a social context marked by fragmentation and an overwhelming plurality of ways of life. Religious identity can be used to defend against fears created by a sense of loss of place.

As globalization transforms the relationships of particular cultures and the significance of the local, the following section looks more closely at the relationship of the global and the local.

⁶⁰ Schreiter, 26.

⁶¹ See the section on definitions in Chapter 5.

Global and Local – Glocalization. Robertson asserts that in globalization processes the global and local are not contradictions, but are mutually dependent. The universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism interpenetrate each other.⁶² The global and the local are aspects of the same process. A “universal” sense of the globe as a compressed single space causes an emphasis of the particular and the local, while a sharpened sense of the particular culture may contribute to an appreciation of cultural diversity worldwide. The local can only be understood in the global context, at the same time, globalization brings about both: a threat to local cultures through homogenization and a respect for diversity and particularity.⁶³ Globalization is seen as a tandem operation with localization. In order to find a terminology that appropriately expresses the dialectic of the global and the local, the particular and universal, Robertson appropriated the term “glocalization” from the economic to the sociological and cultural discourse. George Ritzer affirms the concept of glocalization but points to a caveat. He feels that the idea of glocalization may be too optimistic and downplay fears of homogenization. The term glocalization implies that individuals and local groups are creative agents with the ability to integrate, modify, and adapt globalizing processes to their interests.⁶⁴ He is less optimistic and perceives larger homogenizing tendencies as overwhelming and overpowering local forces. As a counterbalance he has coined the notion of “*grobalization*” according to which global

⁶² Robertson, Globalization, 100.

⁶³ Robertson illustrates his point with the global movement for worldwide indigenization, the concern for empowering indigenous and native cultures in global organizations, such as the World Council of Indigenous People. Other examples of an emphasis of the local in reaction to the global are movements for fair trade and local farming. See Robertson, Globalization, 171.

⁶⁴ Ritzer, 163.

forces with their interest to “see their power, influence, and in some cases profits *grow*” (original emphasis), have the power to determine and shape culture on the local level.⁶⁵

Still, the concept of glocalization and related notions of hybridization are seen widely as adequate to describe the relationship between the global and the local, the universal and particular.⁶⁶ Moreover, the notion of glocalization can be a helpful tool for individuals and communities to understand their place in the global neighborhood. Tomlinson adapts the notion of glocalization to describe a “cultural disposition people living in a globalized world need to cultivate” and calls it “ethical glocalism.”⁶⁷ This attitude that allows persons “to live in both the global and the local at the same time,” to affirm their own cultural context and commitments while cultivating a sense of our connection with other human beings as well as our mutual responsibilities.⁶⁸ In his concept of ethical glocalism, universalism and particularism are held in a creative tension. With respect to the relationship between the universal and particular, Tomlinson draws attention to two different ways of understanding universalism. A misconception is a universalism that promotes cultural homogenization and cultural imperialism. Such a universalism is void of its counterpart particularism and has to be distinguished, however, from a universalism that affirms some basic commonalities of human beings, irrespective of particular cultural differences. Concrete examples of ethical glocalism can be seen in the concern for universal human rights is a universalism that is balanced by an appreciation for the individual, the particular, or in the awareness that local and

⁶⁵ Ritzer, 165.

⁶⁶ Nederveen Pieterse, 53; Lechner and Boli, 141.

⁶⁷ Tomlinson, 194.

⁶⁸ Tomlinson, 195.

individual lifestyle choices about energy consumption, for example, effect our distant neighbors.⁶⁹

As mentioned above, the notions of glocalization and hybridization are related, and ethical glocalism can be adapted to the context of cultural and religious pluralism and guard against relativism. The affirmation of plural particular identities is simultaneous to an affirmation of our equality and connectedness in a global community.⁷⁰ The acknowledgement of difference and particularity goes alongside with an acknowledgement of basic commonalities and of a common identity of humans. The discussion of the particular and the universal has much relevance for interreligious encounters and runs as a common thread throughout this study. The term “glocal” expresses the productive tension of the global and the local and may inform our understanding of the relationships between particular religious traditions: that particularity does not have to be suppressed or given up in search of universals but both principles can be held and affirmed, and balance each other.

Summary

Considering the introductory vignette in light of the description of the social context of globalization in this chapter, it becomes clear that the experiences and the decision of the local church board are affected by global developments. The Turkish Muslim community experiences deterritorialization as the majority of members of the Mosque have migrated from their home to a different country. The practice of their religion provides them with a sense of cultural identity and belonging. The German

⁶⁹ Tomlinson, 69.

⁷⁰ Tomlinson, 192.

citizens experience deterritorialization as their home transforms to a multiethnic neighborhood. Their way of life, their traditions and religious practices are not self evident anymore and are relativized through the presence of different communities next door, which causes a sense of cultural uncertainty. Their decision to express more clearly their Christian identity in response to the Muslim call for prayer can be understood as part of the tension of the global and the local, as an assertion of particularity in response to the globalization processes that impact their community and their lives. Perhaps the social inequality that is part of globalization processes may influence their understanding of the situation. Members of the Turkish community had migrated to Germany beginning in the 1960s in order to escape poverty. As unemployment has been consistently high in recent years in Germany because jobs are cheaper in Asia or the Southern hemisphere, the German citizens feel powerless in the face of global capitalism and are vulnerable to populist claims that migrants take jobs away from German citizens.

The notions of hybridization and glocalization could be utilized as tools to help both communities to develop a sense of connectedness. The concept of hybridization can normalize the experience of the local community as different cultural groups live in close proximity in the same neighborhood. The idea of ethical glocalism can provide a moral impetus for the communities to understand each other as neighbors and learn about each other. The following chapters will explore how a glocal didactic might assist communities and individuals to understand their situation when they encounter other religious communities. At this point it shall be sufficient to note that drawing a map of the social context of globalization is a necessary element in the exploration of the dynamics of interreligious encounters. Not only does a pastoral reflection of

interreligious relationships need to deal with the social context, sociology has attended to the role of religion in the process of globalization as well.

Religion and the Global Context

Globalization has brought members of different traditional world religions in closer contact than ever before. In addition it seems to have caused a resurgence of religion and new religious movements, not only in Asia, Africa and Latin America but also in Western societies. New religious phenomena are new age spirituality in North America and Europe, Pentecostalism in North and Latin America as well as Africa, new religious sects in Buddhism as well as fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. These religious movements are powerful, yet at the same time they lack uniformity.⁷¹ Different religious expressions form a colorful and diverse landscape around the world, and religious pluralism provides a challenge for the identity of particular religions as well as an opportunity for cooperation in addressing the many global problems and issues. The major world religions have a universalistic impetus and thus possibilities to move beyond their particularism. At the same time religions provide very particular symbols, narratives, rituals and communities that provide a sense of meaning. As globalization processes increase homogenization they also sharpen the sense of the particular. The close contact of particular religious identities in a globalized context brings differences more sharply to the surface. The juxtaposition of different belief systems calls into question claims of universal truth that religious movements may put forth. Religions face a challenge of a relativization of truth claims, religious values

⁷¹ Martin E. Marty, "Introduction: The Role of Religion in Cultural Foundations of Ethnonationalism," in Marty and Appleby, 12ff.

and belief systems in a globalized context. They no longer hold the self-evident position and role they once had as different ways of constructing meaning are practiced in close proximity of culturally and religiously diverse urban neighborhoods. One response to this relativization is the assertion and preservation of a particular religious identity over and against another, which can lead to conflict and hostility. At times local social and political conflicts between religious groups are interpreted as conflicts between religions on a global scale, such as Christianity versus Islam, for example. These interpretations can foster a sense of antagonism and escalate conflicts.⁷²

The sociologist Beyer points out that religion has an affinity for particularistic identities and has therefore become somewhat marginalized as a consequence of globalization. At the same time the revitalization of religion is a way of asserting a particular group identity, which is a method of competing for power and influence in the global system.⁷³ Beyer examines the relevance of religion in a globalized world and asks what the possibilities are in today's world for religion to be a determinative force in social processes beyond voluntary and individual belief and practice.⁷⁴

Beyer looks at two different options for religion as it enters the public, political arena in an increasingly globalized society. He distinguishes a liberal and a conservative option. The liberal option tends to be ecumenical and tolerant and engages global problems and issues, while the conservative option tends to be particularistic and champions cultural distinctiveness through reappropriation of traditional religious

⁷² Konrad Raiser, For a Culture of Life: Transforming Globalization and Violence (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002), 45.

⁷³ Beyer, Religion and Globalization, 4.

⁷⁴ Beyer, Religion and Globalization, 12.

antagonistic categories. It can be described as antiglobalist response in that it resists the change globalization brings to “core structure: the family, morality, and religion.”⁷⁵ Because the focus of this dissertation is the Christian context, Beyer’s typology will only be applied to Christian movements in the following paragraphs.

An Antiglobal Response

Fundamentalist movements have grown worldwide in the second half of the twentieth century and can be understood as an antiglobalist response to globalization.⁷⁶ M. P. Joseph underscores that with the decline of socialism, the market logic has become the prevailing utopia, albeit failing to evoke any hope of a dignified future for the poor and underprivileged. Thus, an ideological void has been created that has been effectively captured by religious fundamentalists.⁷⁷ Non-Western fundamentalism reacts against the dominance of Western culture, while a fundamentalist response to globalization within the West is the thrust to hold on the Western Christendom.⁷⁸ Beyer gives particular attention to Christian fundamentalism that promotes particular group values over the whole and is exemplified in the New Christian Right (NCR) in the United States. Although the movement is a particularistic homogeneous group of North American evangelical Protestantism, it has recently reached out to conservative Catholics, Jews, and

⁷⁵ Beyer, Religion and Globalization, 86f, 90f.

⁷⁶ Schreiter, 21.

⁷⁷ Joseph, 160. See also Raymond Grew, “On Seeking the Cultural Context of Fundamentalism,” in Marty and Appleby, 20.

⁷⁸ Mike Featherstone, “An Introduction,” In Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity, ed. Mike Featherstone (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 11.

Mormons under the slogan the “moral majority”. In terms of the global context NCR leaders want to “make America great again.”⁷⁹ While mass immigration has created a wide range of faith traditions in the U.S., making it the most religiously diverse country in the world, the language of a “Christian America” has entered increasingly the public arena through efforts of the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition.⁸⁰ Ruether provides a theological critique of the connection of the group with economic neoliberalism holding up the vision of an American empire. She identifies this ideology as the “heresy of American messianic nationalism”, which is contrary to basic normative Christian teachings.⁸¹

She also points to considerable similarities among fundamentalist movements within Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism and other traditions.⁸² Asserting what Beyer calls “core structures of family, morality, and religion” these movements reject modern secularism while utilizing modern technology to spread their message, they pursue a union of religion and state and reject modern separation of both entities as well as religious pluralism and religious tolerance, and aim to reinstate strict patriarchal norms for family and society, including the suppression of women’s reproductive rights, as well as diverse forms of families, such as in same-sex marriages.⁸³

⁷⁹ Beyer, Religion and Globalization 91.

⁸⁰ Eck, New Religious America, 4-5.

⁸¹ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 166-67.

⁸² Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 26.

⁸³ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 26.

Privatization

As some religious communities choose to engage the religious pluralism and address common global problems and other communities choose an antagonistic stance toward religious diversity, I see a third religious response to globalization, the retrieval to the private space. According to this option, religion or spirituality is understood as a means for personal self actualization or salvation, and the understanding of religious community is limited to like-minded persons. Individuals and communities who focus on an individualistic and private understanding of their religion may not necessarily respond to globalization and pluralism in an antagonistic stance but simply stay clear from an engagement of these issues. The confusion and fear caused by exposure to conflicting truth claims is avoided by remaining in isolation from other communities. In 1972 the ecumenical theologian Ernst Lange put his finger on the provincialism of Christian communities and what he called the parochial imprisonment of the Christian conscience.⁸⁴ He felt that the language of traditional piety did not enable persons to relate their faith to the modern world with its modern forms of organization and its conflicts.

We still divide the world into 'us' and 'them'. We still think of 'peace' as 'law and order' instead of seeing it as an open-ended process in which conflicts are resolved in love and hope. ... The status quo is still given higher religious value than change. ... Christians are living with a parochial conscience in a universal world.⁸⁵

Lange proposed the development of a social ecumenical didactic, a theory and method of learning processes that would carry church communities and individuals

⁸⁴ Ernst Lange, And Yet It Moves: Dream and Reality in the Ecumenical Movement (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1979), 135.

⁸⁵ Lange, 140.

beyond their previous level to awareness and would enable the Christian faith to be much more at home in this world.⁸⁶

Global Theological Flows

Schreiter further develops Beyer's typology and speaks within the context of Christianity of theological flows. Global theological flows are theological discourses that are not uniform. They link and connect discourses that address failures of the global system and address those in the realm of religious beliefs and practices.⁸⁷ What Beyer identifies as a liberal response Schreiter describes in more neutral terms as global theological flows that are linked: theologies of liberation, feminism, ecology, and human rights.⁸⁸ Common denominators of these theological flows are their embrace of their particular contextuality while addressing issues that impact people throughout the world. While antiglobal fundamentalist movements stress their particular group, theological flows are supported by members of different contexts and cultures throughout the world. These theologies aim to unite different people towards the goals of social justice, equality, human dignity of all, and the protection of the environment.

I see connections between global theological flows and the notion of "ethical glocalism" that has been put forth by Tomlinson from a secular sociological perspective. Ethical glocalism is a cultural disposition towards the world that includes a willingness to

⁸⁶ Lange, 139.

⁸⁷ Beyer, Religion and Globalization, 16.

⁸⁸ Schreiter, 16.

engage the Other.⁸⁹ Ethical glocalism thus describes an attitude that allows persons to live in both the global and the local at the same time, to affirm their own cultural context and commitments while cultivating a sense of connection with other human beings as well as mutual responsibilities. A glocal didactic of interreligious encounters pursues the development of such a cultural disposition and willingness to engage the religiously Other. In that sense, a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters seeks to develop a glocal responsibility, an affirmation of one's own personal commitment to one's particular religion while affirming other commitments in a sense of connectedness with the global community.

Global theological flows are mutually linked religious movements tending to global social and ecological problems. They relate dialectically to globalization processes: On the one hand their reflection is antisystemic and critical of certain global mechanisms, such as neoliberal capitalism. On the other hand there is openness to the global context, and expression of concern for justice and healing throughout the globe.

Global theological flows can be understood as efforts to strengthen weak parts of the global fabric. Members of such movements attempt to tend to suffering and social problems in their concrete and immediate context. Others do the same in a different particular locale. Thus, the movements create a quilt of very different patches that are used to fix rips and tears in the global fabric.

⁸⁹ Tomlinson, 183. See also Ulf Hannerz, "Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture," in Featherstone, 239.

Towards a “Glocal Responsibility”

These theological flows can be found within Christianity, but concerns about justice, equality, and the environment have brought together people of different faiths as well. As Klein Goldewijk and De Gaay Fortman point out, the absence of a link between the global economy and a global civilizational perspective calls for input from a religious perspective.⁹⁰ Is there some common ground on which different religions can build their cooperation and shared concern for the world?

Rosemary Radford Ruether does not directly refer to Schreiter’s concept of theological flows, but her book Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions reads like a commentary on the concepts.⁹¹ She puts forth an alternative vision utilizing the values of different world religions that promote reverence for human as well as non-human life and eco systems as well as justice for women and gender equality.

Common ground among world religions has been sought also in the pursuit of a global ethic. The Declaration toward a Global Ethic was developed during the World Parliament of Religions in 1993.⁹² It was followed up by the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities under the leadership of the Roman Catholic theologian Hans Küng.⁹³ Two ethical principles, anchored deeply within the different religions, were considered to be a common core and formed the basis of the first declaration: (1) every

⁹⁰ Berma Klein Goldewijk and Bas De Gaay Fortman, “Globalisation and Civilizational Change: Contemporary Challenges for a Religious Response,” Studies of Interreligious Dialogue 8, no. 1 (1998) : 35.

⁹¹ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 131ff.

⁹² See the section on major developments of the Christian approach to religious pluralism in the North Western context in Küng and Kuschel, chap. 3.

⁹³ It was developed by the InterAction Council in 1997, a group of former heads of governments from all continents, including Jimmy Carter, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Shimon Peres, for example.

human being must be treated humanely; (2) the Golden Rule.⁹⁴ The second declaration affirms a “responsibility of all people to foster a better social order, both at home and globally, a goal which cannot be achieved by laws, prescriptions, and conventions alone,”⁹⁵ The declarations are to be understood within the tradition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The hope was that the declarations would bring to bear moral and spiritual resources to address the ethical issues and problems of the world. The two declarations promote a global ethic and seek to counter separatist religious assertions with dialogue of different cultural and religious traditions and to avoid a “clash of civilizations.”⁹⁶ The declarations are inclusive of different religions as well as secular approaches.

The strength of the global ethic is its emphasis on the interdependence of the human community and the inspiration for intercultural and interreligious learning it generates. In addition, it employs religious traditions and those who practice them to contribute to solutions of global problems. The notion of a global ethic raises some questions as well.

(1) The common denominator is abstract and may reveal more differences than commonalities in concrete ethical situations. An appeal to a common denominator of a global ethic needs to go hand in hand with an acknowledgement of local contextual differences, an appreciation of particularity and diversity. Rather than one global ethic, or one universal meta-narrative global theological flows link groups, rich with their own

⁹⁴ For references within the different traditions, see Küng and Kuschel, 71-72.

⁹⁵ Küng and Schmidt, 6.

⁹⁶ Küng and Schmidt, 77-78.

cultural and religious particularity together in common movements. Or, as Schreiter points out, religious movements can work in larger social processes. Rather than one supposedly objective meta-narrative we may need “provisional definitions.”⁹⁷ Such provisional definitions provide points of interdisciplinary collaboration, of reflection and insertion into society.⁹⁸ They would find expression in small local, sustainable projects of education, health, and community organization rather than grand strategies.⁹⁹ Such local projects would represent patches used to fix up tears and rips and to strengthen the local communities. The scraps used would look very different in material and design, shaped by their concrete geographical, social, cultural, and religious locations. Yet, they would connect with other scraps at different places and potentially form a patchwork quilt.

(2) The global ethic has been developed by religious leaders, the Declaration of Human Responsibilities has been articulated by political leaders. However, in order to create a broader effect, not only politicians and religious leaders but citizens and lay members of religious communities need to be involved. Learning processes need to be developed that empower persons at the grassroots level and in local communities to develop a sense of glocal responsibility. It is one task of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters to develop such learning processes.

⁹⁷ Schreiter, 111.

⁹⁸ Schreiter, 114.

⁹⁹ Schreiter, 112.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter describes the contemporary social context of globalization in which we experience the world as a compressed single space. We are more aware of the world's interdependence than ever before and conscious that we live together with persons near and far away in one global community. At the same time the compressed single place accelerates hybridization, brings different cultural groups closer together and brings about divisions and conflicts, in which numerous religious communities take part. Problems, such as inequality, poverty, violent conflicts, and destruction of the earth represent suffering on a global scale that is felt in concrete locales. These problems can only be tackled in cooperation.

On the one hand, the experience of deterritorialization contributes to a sense of cultural fragmentation and may lead persons to fear the Other and cling more closely to their particular cultural or religious group and more tightly to familiar truth claims. On the other hand, the notion of hybridization can normalize and embrace the experience of cultural mixing and religious pluralism. The concept of glocalization holds the universal and the particular in a creative tension, affirming universals, such as commonalities and interconnectedness of humans throughout the world while sustaining the commitment to one's local place and particular cultural and religious identity. A "glocal responsibility" can provide an impetus for diverse religious communities to bring to bear their moral and spiritual resources to address global problems. Rather than one meta-narrative or uniform approach, global theological flows are like loosely connected patches. They share common concerns, which they address at the local level and work together to patch tears and holes in the fabric of their locale.

In order to empower individuals and religious communities to engage the global context and its problems, fears and defenses need to be addressed. Learning processes need to be developed that assist people to acquire a “glocal responsibility.” Such a cultural disposition towards the world, a sense of responsibility toward the globe and an appreciation of its diversity, is part of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters. At the heart of this approach is the realization that for the sake of sustainability of life we need to realize the sacredness of life and our obligations to that sacredness. Theological reflection on how to engage religious pluralism is an important foundation for such a didactic and will be the focus of the following chapter, which develops a theological road map, delineating a theological path for a glocal didactic within the context of North Western Christianity.

CHAPTER 3

The Patchwork Quilt of Religious Pluralism - A Practical Theology of Interreligious Encounters

Introduction

As part of its renovation a major urban hospital plans to develop a new meditation room. The Advisory Board of the Spiritual Care Department has taken on the task to develop a concept that can be given to the designer for further development. Here is part of the discussion:

Chaplain: *“With the new building I think we should move away from the concept of the traditional chapel we have currently. A space with pews and stained glass has too many Christian connotations. It just does not reflect the diversity of patients and staff we have in our institution.”*

Social Worker: *“I have seen a number of hospitals creating their meditation rooms as a neutral space. They use nature scenery as art, maybe a water fountain in the center. It’s just a quiet space.”*

Nurse: *“Could we offer our weekly mass in such a space?”*

Roman Catholic Priest: *“We could get portable religious symbols and chairs that we get out for Sunday Mass. However, I think a space without specific symbols would be pretty meaningless for our many Latino Catholic patients. The image of our Lady of Guadalupe is so important and comforting to them.”*

Interpreter: *“For some of our Buddhist patients Quan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, is a helpful identification figure as well.”*

Physician: *“Many of my fellow Muslims might be uncomfortable praying in a space with icons.”*

Rabbi (community representative): *“Jews, too, might have trouble in a space with specific symbols such as Mary or the cross. On the other hand, Jews might not seek out a meditation room or chapel frequently. For us, the community is more important, like connecting with a rabbi or the synagogue.”*

Roman Catholic Priest: *“I understand, I’m just saying that all the Catholic patients who come to the chapel now will not come if there is no symbol. It would be meaningless to them. How about building a chapel and a neutral meditation room?”*

Hospital Administrator: *“You mean you can’t get all the religions under one roof? For heaven’s sake! I can tell you right now, space is an*

expensive commodity in this city. We can be glad that the Board approved of building a meditation room. We can't build two, that's for sure."

Chaplain: *"It looks like we're faced with the difficulty of creating a space that will meet very different needs of very different people. In a crisis, people need to be able to connect with something familiar, which means the image for the Lady of Guadalupe for some, Quan Yin for others, no images and praying several times a day towards Mecca for others, and being in a simple quiet space for a different group of people. I wonder if we can come up with a design that incorporates the particular needs and still is a common place for all people. I think we should talk to a designer and try. What do you think?"*

Hospital Administrator: *"Fine with me, as long as you stick with one room."*

This brief dialogue introduces the issue of religious diversity. The difficulty of designing an inclusive religious space of meditation and reflection in a diverse urban setting is indicative of larger questions. Is there a common denominator among different religious traditions, a common unifying principle? Are religious traditions so different from each other that there is no common ground? Are there any points of interconnections? All these questions are important for a theological understanding of religious pluralism and for a theological vision of interreligious relationships and encounters.

The first chapter portrays the context of globalization as a major force in the challenge of religious pluralism as well as describes religious responses to a globalized world, which either isolate one's religious tradition from others through retrieval in a private space, assert the own tradition over and against others, or encourage dialogue and cooperation. The second chapter asks what underlining theological vision can inform interreligious encounters. What theological ideas can motivate a local church, for example, to develop a partnership with a mosque or synagogue? What theological concepts can inform the clinical work of interfaith chaplains or guide the facilitation of a

Clinical Pastoral Education Course, assisting students from different religious traditions to learn from the encounters with patients and peers?

This chapter scans the landscape of Christian theological discourse about religious pluralism. It will not be possible in the framework of this dissertation to draw a complete map. After a broad overview of the development of religious pluralism within Christian theology I will point to a few landmarks and critically review and evaluate selected major position. Then I will propose a theological foundation and methodological considerations for a practical theology of interreligious encounters.

Major Developments of the Christian Approach to Religious Pluralism and Review of Relevant Literature

In 1893 in Chicago in connection with the World's Fair the first World's Parliament of Religions convened. According to Diana Eck the gathering can be seen as one of the opening events of the modern Christian ecumenical movement and as the first act in the modern interreligious movement.¹ It was planned mostly by American Protestant Christians and drew representation from the Jewish, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions. There was one Muslim participant, ten percent women, two African-Americans and no one representing the Native American tradition. Despite the limited representation of diversity, the meeting is seen as a new beginning introducing the

¹ Diana L. Eck, Encountering God: A Spiritual Journey from Bozeman to Banaras (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 24.

religious traditions of Asia to the United States.² One hundred years later the second Parliament of the World's Religions gathered again in Chicago, in 1999 in Capetown and in 2004 in Barcelona, in global events in which co-religionists from all over the world gathered in diverse and complex encounters. Richard Roberts sees the relationship of universality and particularity, so significant in globalization theory, reflected in the 1993 Chicago-gathering and describes its significance as a successful juxtaposition of global values and human universals on the one hand, and diverse cultural diversities on the other hand, holding both poles in a creative tension.³

For Western Protestantism, religious pluralism came to the surface along with the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement at the beginning of the 20th century when churches from all over the world sought to reflect the unity of the Church.⁴ Traditional Christian theology has moved between exclusivist and inclusivist positions, holding on to the uniqueness and absolute salvific significance of the revelation of God in Christ. In his overview Introducing Theologies of Religions, Paul Knitter provides helpful categories to sort through the diverse landscape of approaches to religious pluralism within Christian theology. He distinguishes a replacement model, representing a predominantly conservative Christian and evangelical approach holding onto Christianity as the only true religion, from a fulfillment model, predominant in the Catholic tradition

² Richard H. Roberts, Religion, Theology, and the Human Sciences (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 248.

³ Roberts, 249.

⁴ S. Wesley Ariarajah, "Interfaith Dialogue," in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, Geoffrey, and Pauline Webb (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 281.

understanding Christianity as the fulfillment of the concerns of the religions.⁵ The experience of religious pluralism, especially in churches in Asia and Africa, challenged Christian theology to develop different conceptualizations of the relationship with other religious traditions. Dialogue with other religious traditions was introduced and practiced in concrete historical situations in Asia, for example, where younger churches worked together with peoples of different traditions in the development of nations. The World Council of Churches (WCC) convened the first inter-religious dialogue of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian participants in 1970 in Lebanon, and following that meeting in 1971 the WCC central committee created a new Sub-unit on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies.⁶

In the 1980s a number of conferences brought women of different religious traditions into dialogue. “Women of Faith Conferences” with representatives from the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions during the 1980s resulted in the essay collection Women of Faith in Dialogue. Participants discovered that dialogue among women of different religions is uniquely possible as experiences around violence, leadership roles in society and religious institutions, reproductive issues, and social change form a common context for conversation. This is evidenced also in the essay collection Speaking of Faith, the result of an international, interreligious conference in Harvard in 1983 on Women, Religion, and Social Change.

The new awareness of the global context and its religious pluralism is also reflected in academia. In 1984, at a conference at Temple University in Philadelphia,

⁵ Paul F. Knitter, Introducing Theologies of Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 19-103.

⁶ Ariarajah, “Interfaith Dialogue,” 285.

perspectives toward a universal theology of religion were captured in a volume with the same title edited by Leonard Swidler.⁷ In 1986 a number of male and female theologians from the Northern and Southern hemisphere met to discuss a pluralist theological approach, marking a paradigm shift from what they called the myth of normativeness and superiority of Christianity to a re-interpretation of Christian teachings in the context of the encounter with many other living religious traditions.⁸ The different approaches have a pluralist approach in common, yet are very diverse with regard to their perspectives and are assembled in the essay collection The Myth of Christian Uniqueness.⁹ Paul Knitter finds many of their concerns summarized in a mutuality model affirming many true religions and pushing for a dialogue in which mutual learning can occur. This approach has been complemented and challenged by the publication Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions.¹⁰ Some of the concerns presented in this essay collection represent the acceptance model which, as Paul Knitter points out, takes seriously the postmodern situation and sees many true religions besides each other with a lesser urge to dialogue and engagement.

Georg Evers' series "Trends and Developments in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue" in the journal Studies in Interreligious Dialogue provides overviews over

⁷ Leonard Swidler, ed., Proem to Toward a Universal Theology of Religion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 3.

⁸ Paul F. Knitter, Preface to The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions, ed. John Hick and Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), viiff.

⁹ John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, eds., The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987).

¹⁰ Gavin D'Costa, ed., Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

major international developments in the field.¹¹ According to his assessment the climate of cooperative co-existence of different religions has become rougher since the beginning of the new millennium, and the optimism that accompanied interreligious dialogue in the 1980's has diminished.¹² The developments of and following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 have curbed interreligious dialogue. The increase of terrorist attacks in Europe, the murder of Theo van Gogh and subsequent outbursts of violence in the Netherlands, the increase of Anti-Semitism in France, as well as the revolt of Muslim immigrant youth in France, have increased fear and stereotypes toward Islam and lead many to believe that social experiments of multiculturalism have failed.¹³ Georg Evers concludes that dialogue is in a crisis at this time. The voices of those who negate the possibility and effectiveness of interreligious dialogue grow louder and challenge the interreligious movement to deal with questions of religiously motivated conflict and violence.¹⁴ At the same time this crisis may urge persons from different religions to engage even more urgently in cooperation and dialogue.

Paul Knitter has provided detailed discussions of a various models of theologies of religious pluralism in No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes

¹¹ Georg Evers, "Trends and Developments in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue," Studies in Interreligious Dialogue, see especially 11, no. 2 (2001) : 235-49; 13, no. 2 (2003) : 240-54; 14, no. 2 (2004) : 235-50; 15, no. 2 (2005) : 244-56.

¹² Georg Evers, "Trends and Developments in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue," Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 11, no. 2 (2001) : 236.

¹³ Georg Evers, "Trends and Developments in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue," Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 13, no. 2 (2003): 242; 15, no. 2 (2005) : 246.

¹⁴ Georg Evers, "Trends and Developments in the Field of Interreligious Dialogue," Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 11, no. 2 (2001) : 246.

Toward the World Religions and the more recent Introducing Theologies of Religion.¹⁵

In his publications Knitter practices principles of dialogue by listening to and respectfully representing the concerns of diverse positions as well as asking constructive critical questions. In his article “Encountering the World of Dialogue” James Kroege reviews twenty publications of Orbis Books’ Faith Meets Faith Series from 1987 through 1991, which includes a wide diversity of approaches toward religious pluralism.¹⁶ Another succinct overview of diverse approaches is offered by Perry Schmidt-Leukel.¹⁷

The body of literature for a theology of religious pluralism is enormous. In Chapter 2 it was asserted that the universal and the particular are two necessary poles that interpenetrate each other. In this chapter I will discuss different theological approaches of religious pluralism with the question in mind of how they understand the relationship between the universal and the particular and how they integrate both poles and hold them in a creative tension. Among Christian theologies the positions that advocate for a global interpretation of religion emphasize the universal pole, while others underscore the distinctiveness of religious traditions and emphasize the particular pole. I will consider briefly two proposals of a global theology as put forth by John Hick and Wilfred Cantwell Smith and a critique of their versions of pluralism by theologians who emphasize the distinctiveness of Christianity, such as Mark Heim and George

¹⁵ Knitter, No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985); and Introducing Theologies.

¹⁶ James H. Kroege, “Encountering the World of Dialogue,” Studies in Interreligious Dialogue 3, no. 1 (1993) : 71-92.

¹⁷ Perry Schmidt-Leukel, “Pluralistische Religionstheologie – Warum und Wozu?” Oekumenische Rundschau 49, no. 3 (2000): 259-72.

Lindbeck.¹⁸ A third group of theologies, which integrate both, the universal and the particular, are discussed in more detail. I see the approaches developed by John Cobb, Raimundo Panikkar, and Maura O'Neill's and other feminist as well as Paul Knitter's and other liberationist theologians within this category.¹⁹

¹⁸ See John Hick, "The Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," in John Hick and Paul F. Knitter, eds., The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 16-36. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, "Idolatry," in Hick and Knitter, 53-68; Smith, "Theology and the World Religious History," in Swidler, 51-72; and Towards a World Theology: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981). See S. Mark Heim, Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995); George A. Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984). See also Paul J. Griffiths, An Apology for Apologetics: A Study in the Logic of Interreligious Dialogue (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991); and "The Uniqueness of Christian Doctrine Defended," in D'Costa, 157-73.

¹⁹ John B. Cobb, Jr., Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 41ff.; Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox, 1975); and Transforming Christianity and the World: A Way Beyond Absolutism and Relativism, ed. Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999).

Raimundo Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany, rev. and enlarged ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981); Panikkar, "The Invisible Harmony: A Universal Theory of Religion or a Cosmic Confidence in Reality?", in Swidler 118-53; Raimundo Panikkar, "Theology in a Culturally Diverse World," in Pluralism and Oppression: Theology in World Perspective, Annual Publications of the College Theology Society, v. 34, ed. Paul F. Knitter, 3-22 (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991); Panikkar, "The Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges: Three Kairological Moments of Christic Self-Consciousness," in Hick and Knitter, 89-114; and The Trinity and World Religions: Icon-Person-Mystery, Inter-Religious Dialogue Series, no. 4 (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1970).

Paul F. Knitter, "Common Ground or Common Response? Seeking Grounds for Interreligious Dialogue," Studies for Interreligious Dialogue 2, no. 2 (1992) : 111-22; Knitter, One Earth, Many Religions: Multifaith Dialogue and Global Responsibility (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995); Knitter, ed., Pluralism and Oppression: Theology in World Perspective Annual Publications of the College Theology Society, v. 34 (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1988); Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," in Hick and Knitter, 178-97.

Diana L. Eck and Devaki Jain, eds., Speaking of Faith: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Women, Religion and Social Change (London: Women's Press, 1986); Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, ed., Women of Faith in Dialogue (New York: Crossroad, 1987); Maura O'Neill, Women Speaking, Women Listening: Women in Interreligious Dialogue (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); O'Neill, "Examining Gender Issues in Interreligious Dialogue," in Knitter, Pluralism, 125-38; Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, "In Search of Justice: Religious Pluralism from a Feminist Perspective," in Hick and Knitter, 149-61; Helene Egnell, "Dialogue for Life: Feminist Approaches to Inter-Faith Dialogue," Voices from the Third World 25, nos. 1- 2 (2002) : 20-27; Joseph Esterman, "Inter-Faith Dialogue and the Option for the Poor: Some Methodological Remarks," Voices from the Third World 25, nos. 1-2 (2002) : 20-27; Kate McCarthy, "Women's Experience as a Hermeneutical Key to a Christian Theology of Religions," Studies of Interreligious Dialogue 6, no. 2 (1996) : 163-73; Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism.

After reviewing and critically evaluating these different approaches of religious pluralism, I will propose a foundation and methodology for a practical theology of interreligious encounters.

The Universal-Particular-Continuum in Theologies of Religious Pluralism

Approaches Emphasizing the Universal Pole

Perhaps one of the most pronounced proponents of a pluralist theology of religions is John Hick whose approach shall be the first landmark of our theological map. Hick feels that in a changed global context Christianity has to undergo a paradigm shift and embrace itself as one true among other true religions. An epistemological argument forms the core foundation of his approach.²⁰ He applies Kant's distinction of the noumenal world, as it exists unperceived, and the phenomenal world, that has gone through the act of perception, to the concept of the Real *in se* and the Real as it is perceived in different ways as the divine. It can be perceived as Jahweh, Allah, the Tao, and the Holy Trinity and so on. The Real *in se* is ineffable, and the different traditions represent the human response to this ultimate Reality. In that sense human religious experience involves some projection while being at the same time a response to a transcendent Reality.²¹ Hick claims that the great world religions have a soteriological core in common. In different ways the religious traditions call human beings to transcend the ego-centeredness to become re-centered in the ultimate mystery, which the Christian

²⁰ Regarding his moral-historical and his exegetical argument see Hick, "Non-Absoluteness of Christianity," 24-34; and Christian Theology, 87 – 101.

²¹ Hick, Christian Theology , 28.

tradition calls God.²² This soteriological core can be called salvation, liberation or enlightenment, depending on the particular tradition. Hick claims that this is the central concern of all great world religions.²³

While interpreting the Christian understanding of God and salvation with a philosophical framework of Enlightenment Europe, Hick claims that his approach does not stem from a Western idealistic one-world idea. He utilizes modern tools from the field of contemporary epistemological studies but the pluralistic impetus can be found in earlier epochs and pre-modern times.²⁴

Hick understands religious pluralism as a theological approach that leaves the different religious systems intact while providing a meta-theory about these traditions as different human responses to the ultimate Real.²⁵ He concedes that his approach does not describe the religious traditions as they may understand themselves. Moreover, he claims that a pluralist approach needs to move beyond each tradition to a more comprehensive view, to a global interpretation in order to leave the absolutism of particular traditions behind.²⁶

Hick's pluralistic theology confronts the global compressed single space and moves Christian theology and church beyond its particular to a wider pluralistic perspective. The clarity and consistency of his thinking is appealing. However, it also represents its deepest problems. It appears that rational consistency is a central criterion

²² Hick, Christian Theology, 17.

²³ Hick, Christian Theology, 18.

²⁴ Hick, Christian Theology, 37.

²⁵ Hick, Christian Theology, 42.

²⁶ Hick, Christian Theology, 47f.

for Hick's pluralist hypothesis. He achieves this consistency by evading the ambiguity that seems to be so much a part of diverse and plural ways of thinking. There is little tension or paradox in Hick's approach. For example, does the concept of incarnation really lead directly to Christian superiority, as Hick claims, or is there a way to hold both the belief in Christ, both human and divine, while affirming and embracing the divine in other traditions?²⁷ Hick evades such tensions by moving outside the particularity of a tradition to a "comprehensive approach," a meta-theory. The idea of a meta-theory strikes one as a Western approach. Is it really possible to step outside one's tradition without particular viewpoints creeping in, just now under the mantle of a quasi-objective global interpretation? For example, the soteriological core concern in all world religions provides a lens that reads these traditions not on their own terms but through a particular, perhaps still Christian perspective. It seems that on the universal-particular-continuum Hick emphasizes the universal at the cost of the particular. He develops a foundation for a pluralist theology primarily with reference to epistemology and reaches for a comprehensive theory.

A second approach is represented by Wilfred Cantwell Smith who focuses on the history of religions. Smith claims that Western theology perceives reality in relatively fixed patterns, rather than a process in which we participate. However, the study of religion is the study of persons, and human history, including religious history, is a web of relationships.²⁸

²⁷ Hick, Christian Theology, 87.

²⁸ Smith, Towards a World Theology, 48; and "Theology and the World Religious History," 3.

In the perspective of the historian the unity of religions does not mean commonality but lies in the interconnectedness. For Smith the universal, our human commonality, is located in our solidarity, which precedes our particularity and is part of our self-transcendence.²⁹ Religions have been historically interconnected and have influenced each other. We are connected through a common history of religious processes, our own as well as those of our neighboring community.³⁰ Thus, Smith understands the project of a global theology as a collaborative project, in which a Christian theology of religion should be one in a series of theologies. Such a global theology moves beyond dialogue to multilateral colloquy, confronting the problems of the modern world side-by-side.³¹

Smith does not envision one universal theory of religion but rather a global project of different religious voices working together in a colloquy. As he contributes the perspective of history and interconnectedness he takes up concerns that are addressed by Nederveen Pieterse in his concept of hybridization. As cultures are fluid and mixed, so are religions as part of cultures. Christianity cannot be cut off from other traditions as if it were an entity with metaphysical boundaries. Smith's attention to the historical interconnections and mutual influence of religions on each other can teach Christians to move beyond a primary concern about the purity of dogma and the definition of boundaries to accept the reality of mixing in the realm of religion.

Smith emphasizes the universal, which precedes our particularity and underscores the interconnections of religions, but gives little attention to their differences. He does not

²⁹ Smith, Towards a World Theology, 79.

³⁰ Smith, Towards a World Theology, 38.

³¹ Smith, Towards a World Theology, 193.

address how to handle their disconnections and conflicts. The relationships of religious communities are influenced by their beliefs as well as social, economic factors, and power. What are the conditions of true corporate knowledge and dialogue? How would Smith address unequal access to power of naming? Another question is raised when asking who the representatives of a global theological colloquy Smith envisions are. He does not directly comment with regard to this question but he seems to have primarily academic theologians in mind. As part of my proposal of a practical theology of interreligious encounters I will address in more detail the need to move interreligious dialogue beyond the academic to the grassroots level of religious communities.

Approaches Emphasizing the Particular Pole

In contrast to a global theology of religion, postmodern scholars point out that it is impossible to find a common values system or perspective on truth. For example, George Lindbeck understands religion as a cultural and linguistic framework that shapes the way we experience the world.³² Therefore it is very difficult or even impossible to have a single universal experience or common ground within the different religions.³³ Religious traditions are incommensurable and untranslatable.³⁴ We can see the world only within one particular viewpoint. Lindbeck's approach seeks to safeguard against the human tendency to view others and their worldview in the mirror of our own perceptions as well

³² George Lindbeck, The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 33.

³³ Knitter, Introducing, 181. A full description of the postliberal approach, which Knitter describes as the acceptance model, would move beyond the scope of this dissertation. Here I present a basic feature of the model and refer for more details to Knitter's analysis, 173ff.

³⁴ Knitter, Introducing, 225.

as to honor the integrity of particular traditions. A similar concern is expressed by the theologian Mark Heim who understands dialogue with other traditions as an opportunity to grow in one's own faith through an "encounter with a religious pattern of universal scope which cannot be fully assimilated."³⁵ Heim goes further than suggesting different frameworks of life and thought. He proposes the existence of a real diversity of salvations, of actual religious ends.³⁶ He critiques pluralist approaches for not taking real differences seriously enough, in other words, for not being pluralist enough.³⁷ He bases his understanding of multiple salvations as ends for different religious ways on the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, which conceptualizes differences in communion with each other within God.³⁸ Heim understands the Trinity as a "map that finds room for, indeed requires, concrete truth in other religions," and "different religious ends as distinct relations with aspects of triune life."³⁹ Heim proposes four different types of human destiny after death, salvation as communion through Christ with God, fulfillments of other various religious traditions, isolation from God through clinging to created goods, and annihilation.⁴⁰ While he seeks to hold both, the "finality of Christ and the independent validity of other ways", he seems to rank the religious paths higher than

³⁵ S. Mark Heim, Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion, Faith Meets Faith Series, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 159.

³⁶ Heim, Salvations, 6.

³⁷ Heim, Salvations, 7.

³⁸ Heim, Salvations, 158ff.

³⁹ S. Mark Heim, The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends, Sacra Doctrina (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 167, 275.

⁴⁰ Heim, Depth of the Riches, 272.

secularist or atheist philosophies and Christian salvation as the superior of the religious paths.⁴¹

While Lindbeck and Heim accentuate the differences of the various religious traditions, they also want to protect the integrity of the framework of Christian doctrine and community and thus underscore the boundaries within a dialogue situation. Two dimensions of interreligious encounters do not seem accounted for if one would follow their priorities: interconnections between people of different faiths as well as the shared context of this world with its urgent problems. Both perspectives do not provide encouragement and tools to engage persons from other faith traditions and be changed through the encounter. As Knitter points out, if we cannot come to any common criteria or discourse, then ultimately, what is true will be determined by those in power of naming.⁴² Knitter underlines the need for a coordinated and cooperative response of different nations and religions in order to address the urgent global problems. Postmodern concerns cannot be an excuse to abandon or diminish such efforts, or may lead to isolationism or relativism.⁴³

Approaches Integrating the Universal and Particular Pole

A third group understands Christian theology as open to dialogue, yet from a confessional perspective, asserting that it is impossible to move beyond the particular perspective to a quasi-neutral standpoint.⁴⁴ In the following I present primarily the

⁴¹ Heim, Salvations, 3.

⁴² Knitter, One Earth, 56.

⁴³ Knitter, Introducing, 225.

⁴⁴ Thomas Dean, "Universal Theology and Dialogical Dialogue," in Swidler, 173.

approaches of John Cobb and Raimundo Panikkar as each in a different way integrates pluralism not by abandoning but by embracing the particular Cristian perspective. Paul Knitter, Stanley Samartha, Maura O'Neill, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marjorie Hewitt Suchoki as well as other theologians from the Southern Hemisphere represent a feminist-liberationist perspective, which also seeks to account for particularity as well as universal aspects of Christian teachings.

Christology in the Context of Religious Pluralism. The encounter with different religions as well as with the problems of the global context has led theologians to reach deeply within Christian teachings and understand their meaning in this new context.

Stanley Samartha, an Indian Protestant theologian who served from 1968 to 1980 as director of the WCC Program on Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies, represents a perspective of the Southern hemisphere. His book One Christ-Many Religions is shaped by his experiences with his work in the WCC as well as his life in the multireligious society in India.⁴⁵ Samartha responds to those who fear a watering down of Christology in a theology of religious pluralism. He acknowledges that the protest against syncretism was an important voice when protestant theology stood up against fascist ideologies in Nazi Germany that sought to mix Christian faith with state ideology. However, an uncritical application of the idea of "Christ against religions" in the context of Asia and Africa, backed with Western military and economic power turns the crucified into the conquering Christ.⁴⁶ Samartha holds on to the distinctiveness of the

⁴⁵ Stanley J. Samartha, One Christ – Many Religions: Toward a Revised Christology (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), xiii.

⁴⁶ Samartha, One Christ, 101.

Christian and other religions as well a relational posture to neighbors of other faiths, avoiding essentialism, the search for a common essence in religions.⁴⁷ Both, Samartha and Knitter, refer to the Second Testament and the history of the evolution of christological doctrines and find that the interpretation of Jesus was from the beginning diverse, in process, and the fruit of dialogue.⁴⁸ The historical context of biblical texts that express normative Christological teachings forbids reading them as doctrinal statements, but rather as the language of confession and testimony. Creeds are affirmations of faith and expressions of commitment that are important within the worship and life of the church but not as negative criticisms toward other people. “The more a community realizes that its savior *really* does make God known, the more it realizes that this God is a mystery ever more than what has been made known – *Deus semper major*, the God ever beyond.”⁴⁹ If one does not engage in new interpretation of fundamental texts with changing contexts and horizons of experience one runs the risk of developing an idolatrous deposit of faith.⁵⁰

Based on his interpretation of the teaching and work of Jesus of Nazareth as focused on the realm of God, a realm of soteria, well-being for all, Knitter then moves to what he calls a soterio-centrism: “A Christian liberation theology of religions, therefore, will propose as the “common” (though still ‘shaky’) ground or starting point for religious encounter not theos, the ineffable mystery of the divine, but rather, soteria, the “ineffable

⁴⁷ Stanley J. Samartha, “The Cross and the Rainbow,” in Hick and Knitter, 70.

⁴⁸ Knitter, *No Other Name*, 177.

⁴⁹ Knitter, *No Other Name*, 202.

⁵⁰ Knitter, *No Other Name*, 173.

mystery of salvation.”⁵¹ For Knitter this approach does not seem as prone to ideological abuse for it does not impose one’s own views of God or the Ultimate.⁵² He understands soteria – short of claiming it as a universal truth - at times as common, though shaky ground, as common context and as a common process.⁵³

Marjorie Suchocki as well emphasizes the soteria, the reign of God as a focal point for the integration of religious pluralism. In order to avoid relativism in a pluralist discourse, she moves justice as a fundamental criterion and focal point in the interreligious dialogue and actions. Because within each religion are criteria for judging what is good, Suchocki is confident that justice can be employed as a self-critical norm in interreligious and intrareligious dialogue in a nonimperialistic fashion.⁵⁴ Justice and well-being are defined differently in different cultures and traditions, and a pluralistic theology needs to take the interreligious partners seriously by engaging disagreements and different perceptions about truth.⁵⁵ Dialogue among religions includes discussion of the various criteria.⁵⁶ Suchocki envisions an engaged dialogue of different religions drawn from visions of ideal forms of human existence envisioned in each religion.⁵⁷ The focus of dialogue then is shifted to the concreteness of human well-being.

⁵¹ Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology,” 187.

⁵² Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology,” 187.

⁵³ Knitter, One Earth, 81.

⁵⁴ Suchocki, “In Search of Justice,” 156.

⁵⁵ Suchocki, Divinity and Diversity, 20.

⁵⁶ Suchocki, Divinity and Diversity, 57.

⁵⁷ Suchocki, “In Search of Justice,” 159.

I wonder, whether Knitter and Suchocki ultimately shift the problem of the Archimedean point, the common ground, from Christocentrism to another centrism. Is the basileia, the kingdom of God, more “neutral” and thus more suitable as a bridge to dialogue with other faiths? Can a Christian understanding separate the understanding of the basileia from Christ? Knitter tries to avoid a relativism that claims the truth of a religious tradition as significant for some, but irrelevant for others. Acknowledging real differences between religions, he still tries to establish some common ground: “On the basis of allowing real diversity we can then look for a shaky common ground, even though it may be in need of being patched up and re-examined.”⁵⁸

Particular Global Theologies. John Cobb represents an approach to pluralism that emphasizes the real differences between particular religious ways. With David Griffin one may understand Cobb’s model as “deep” or “differential pluralism.”⁵⁹ While according to “identist pluralism” religions are directed toward essentially the same universal religious object and religious end, “differential pluralism” understands religions as being directed toward different religious ends.⁶⁰ Cobb shares with those emphasizing the particularity of religious traditions a suspicion toward the search for a common ground, especially if the common ground is understood as a condition for the dialogue. He has gathered rich experiences in the dialogue with Buddhism and emphasizes that Christianity and Buddhism are very different spiritual paths. They do not contradict each other, but articulate different truths. Diverse particular religions may have certain

⁵⁸ Knitter, One Earth, 76.

⁵⁹ David Ray Griffin, “John Cobb’s Whiteheadian Complementary Pluralism,” in David Ray Griffin, ed., Deep Religious Pluralism (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 39.

⁶⁰ David Ray Griffin, “Religious Pluralism: Generic, Identist, and Deep,” in Griffin, ed., Deep Religious Pluralism, 24.

elements in common, but those elements do not “constitute what all the traditions regard as most important.”⁶¹

While accentuating the particularity of the Christian faith, Cobb does not remain fixed on its boundaries. A convinced particular religious identity, moreover, provides strong roots for radical openness. As Christ is the “principle of creative transformation,” christocentrism presents the “deepest and fullest reason for openness to others.”⁶² Faithfulness to Christ means openness to the future and requires immersion in pluralism, as it is “is precisely there that Christ now works, impeded by our failure to recognize him and by our continuing association of faith with past, particularized expressions of Christ.”⁶³ Cobb thus envisions plural global confessional theologies – with plural “s” - that celebrate the diversity and strengthen their particular religious identities.⁶⁴ All our understanding of reality is conditioned: While one tradition has “grasped important aspects of reality, reality in its entirety is always more.”⁶⁵ We cannot “decide before the dialogue what we can learn from it,” and the encounter with other traditions will deepen, complement and transform our faith.⁶⁶ Cobb emphasizes difference and particularity of the religious traditions while encouraging Christians to be open for the interreligious

⁶¹ Cobb, Beyond Dialogue, 41ff.; Transforming Christianity, 181.

⁶² Cobb, Transforming Christianity, 71; Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, 87.

⁶³ Cobb, Christ in a Pluralistic Age, 187.

⁶⁴ Cobb, Transforming Christianity, 59.

⁶⁵ Cobb, Transforming Christianity, 66.

⁶⁶ Cobb, Beyond Dialogue, 31; Griffin, “John Cobb’s Whiteheadian Complementary Pluralism,” in Griffin, ed., Deep Religious Pluralism, 39.

encounter. His concept, however, gives less urgency to engage the religiously Other, especially beyond the context of academic and religious leadership.

Dialogical Dialogue. Raimundo Panikkar represents another confessional position that attributes weight to both the universal and the particular. A son of a Spanish Roman Catholic mother and a Hindu Indian father he has been nurtured by both traditions. He is a Roman Catholic priest and an accredited scholar of Hinduism and perhaps personifies hybridity of cross-cultural heritage and interreligious experience.

While he acknowledges that the intent behind the formulation of a universal theory of religions may foster dialogue, he also identifies the danger of imposing its own language or frame of reference in which the dialogue has to take place and thus can represent a form of intellectual colonialism.⁶⁷ His critique of a universal meta-theory of religion includes a critique of Western culture, in which he identifies a thrust to reduce everything to one single pattern with the claim to universality.⁶⁸

In my understanding the core of Panikkar's conceptualization of the relationship between the universal and particular is the *pars in toto* effect. Three clarifications shall prepare its understanding. (1) Panikkar distinguishes the universal from the general, as the general detracts from concreteness whereas the universal is centered, turned toward its own center: *universus*. (2) The particular is different from the concrete. Whereas the particular is a part of the whole, the concrete can embody a universal.⁶⁹ (3) Pluralism cannot be rightly understood in quantitative patterns of thinking.⁷⁰ Panikkar asserts that a

⁶⁷ Panikkar, "Invisible Harmony," 124.

⁶⁸ Panikkar, "Invisible Harmony," 121, 123.

⁶⁹ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 107.

⁷⁰ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 112.

pluralistic christological affirmation denies a quantitative individualization in the Mystery of Christ: “The saving power – which Christians call Christ – is neither one nor many.”⁷¹

This understanding of the relationship of the universal and the concrete leads to Panikkar’s interpretation of the Christ event as the *pars in toto* effect: The mystery of incarnation affirms that in the concreteness of one human dwells the fullness of divinity. “We see the whole through our window; we see and even are the *totum in parte* (whole in part).”⁷² The universal and eternal Logos has been incarnated in Christ, yet Christ will never totally be known on earth.⁷³ Thus, Panikkar understands the Christ event not as an absolutely universal one but as the center of reality as seen by the Christian tradition.⁷⁴

Consequently, in order to engage other religions we do not have to move outside our particular tradition to a quasi-neutral standpoint, but we have to be at home in our own tradition which includes critical participation.⁷⁵

While Panikkar affirms the significance of the particular, or expressed more accurately, the concrete of the particular religious traditions, he also seeks to affirm the universal. He draws on a Trinitarian notion of reality, which he also calls a theanthropocosmic vision, a unity between the divine-human-cosmic reality. There is no absolute center, moreover, reality is concentric, and different traditions reflect,

⁷¹ Panikkar, “Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges,” 111.

⁷² Panikkar, “Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges,” 107.

⁷³ See Knitter’s analysis of Panikkar’s theology in Knitter, No Other Name?, 155-156.

⁷⁴ Panikkar, “Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges,” 92.

⁷⁵ Panikkar, “Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges,” 139.

complement, and correct each other.⁷⁶ Panikkar affirms a unity of religions which is not to be confused with uniformity of religions.⁷⁷

Religions that encounter each other can mutually enrich each other. Each religion may be a dimension of the other in a kind of perichoresis.⁷⁸ The human dimension of religion includes the possibility of mutual conflict.⁷⁹ However, common as well as irreconcilable aspects can be accepted.⁸⁰

Panikkar draws on Pneumatology to move to a universal orientation, which he sees in a cosmic confidence in life.⁸¹ He defines this as fidelity, a loyalty and trust in the cosmos that is not based on the logos but a work of the Spirit.⁸² Panikkar sees Christianity in a new context challenged through the problems of humankind, which calls for a dialogical theology and a pluralistic attitude.⁸³ In order to address the many environmental, social and political problems humanity is facing today, no religious tradition can be on its own but needs the collaboration of the many different traditions of the world.⁸⁴

⁷⁶ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 109.

⁷⁷ Panikkar, Unknown Christ, 55.

⁷⁸ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 112.

⁷⁹ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 112.

⁸⁰ Panikkar, "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 109.

⁸¹ Panikkar, "Invisible Harmony," 138.

⁸² Panikkar, "Invisible Harmony," 143; 148.

⁸³ Raimundo Panikkar, Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics: Cross-Cultural Studies (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 232; "Jordan, the Tiber, and the Ganges," 102, 109.

⁸⁴ Panikkar, "Invisible Harmony," 143.

Rather than a comparative approach to religion in a global theology, Panikkar emphasizes the *encounter* in which we can “learn from the other, opening ourselves from our standpoint to a dialogical dialogue that does not seek to win or convince, but to search together from our different vantage points.”⁸⁵ Religious traditions change through this contact, and the dialogue is a source of theological understanding. The religions of our neighbors become a religious question for us.⁸⁶ Dialogical dialogue is an open process and seeks truth by trusting the other and is a religious act par excellence as the need for the other is recognized.⁸⁷

Different from Hick’s comparative approach and much like Cobb Panikkar reaches deep within the Christian tradition in order to affirm a pluralistic and dialogical theology. As Cobb concentrates on christology and Panikkar on the Trinity, they consider these particular Christian symbols not as obstacles but pathways to a pluralism. Panikkar reaches toward a universal common ground in what he calls cosmic confidence in life that leads to collaboration in addressing global problems. I wonder if he comes close to subsuming the different religions in one principle when he affirms a theanthropocosmic vision or Trinitarian notion as a fundamental attitude through which we can understand and share basic insights of most of the religions of the world.⁸⁸ The strength of his contribution, however, in my view is that he enables contemporary Christians to embrace the ambiguities of a global pluralistic context. He is able to hold in creative tension the

⁸⁵ Panikkar, “Invisible Harmony,” 141.

⁸⁶ Panikkar, “Invisible Harmony,” 141.

⁸⁷ Panikkar, Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics, 243.

⁸⁸ This is one of the main theses of Panikkar’s publication Trinity and World Religions. See page 6, for example.

universal as well as the concrete, commonalities as well as conflicts among religions, the intelligibility as well as the incommensurability and mystery of reality, our need for truth as well as our limitation in comprehending truth.

So far, much attention has been given to the particularity of religious beliefs in a global pluralist context. The interrelationships between religions, however, cannot be fully understood without attention to the particularities of the social context. Giving attention to power, difference, and gender, a number of liberation and feminist theologians connect concerns of liberation and justice with concerns of religious pluralism. Some reach within and re-interpret the Christian tradition in order to formulate a vision that orients interreligious encounters to a concern for the world and its problems.

Feminist Theology and Religious Pluralism. Marjorie Suchocki points to a natural connection between the concerns of liberation and pluralist theologies, as she sees correlations between religious imperialism and sexism.⁸⁹ In the publication Women of Faith in Dialogue resulting from “Women of Faith Conferences” United Methodist minister Jeanne Audrey Powers highlights that the experience of having been silenced and rendered insignificant in their own traditions can sensitize women in special ways to the need of listening in openness to the dialogue partner from a different religious tradition.⁹⁰ As Helene Egnell points out, women have less “vested interests” in their religious institutions and can challenge “malestream” inter-faith dialogue to a critical

⁸⁹ Suchocki, “In Search of Justice,” 151ff. Her proposal of justice as a focus point in interreligious dialogue is further explained in the section ‘Interreligious Dialogue and Global Responsibility’ in this chapter.

⁹⁰ Jeanne Audrey Powers, “Women of Faith and This Volume,” in Women of Faith in Dialogue, ed. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 3.

evaluation of the oppressive aspects of religion.⁹¹ From the margins where women stand in their religious traditions they are sensitive to distortions of exclusive truth claims for those who lack power. According to Kate McCarthy feminist theology of both the Northern and Southern hemispheres celebrates diversity by speaking from its own particularity.⁹²

Maura O'Neill's book Women Speaking, Women Listening responds to the void of the female voice in interreligious dialogue. She sees the pluralistic approaches to interreligious dialogue as insufficiently plural as the difference and particularity of gender goes unacknowledged.⁹³ O'Neill contends that feminist epistemologies can provide unique contributions to the pluralist situation, since truth is not understood as objective knowledge but as emerging in conversation and dialogue as part of expressing fully one's own as well as hearing the other's experience.⁹⁴ Ways of knowing and thinking as well as ethical deliberations are different, not only among religions, but also among men and women; these differences need to receive conscious attention in interreligious dialogue.⁹⁵ She illustrates her point with a closer look at Hick's understanding of a common core of different religions. According to Hick, the religions have in common that they move the person beyond self-centeredness to reality-

⁹¹ Egnell, 101. Rosemary Radford Ruether in her article "Feminism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue" also explores links for interreligious dialogue in women's search for participation in leadership and shaping of their different sacred traditions and symbols. Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminism and Jewish-Christian Dialogue: Particularism and Universalism in the Search for Religious Truth," in Hick and Knitter, 142.

⁹² McCarthy, 165.

⁹³ O'Neill, Women Speaking, ix.

⁹⁴ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 19.

⁹⁵ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 29.

centeredness. A number of feminist theologians and psychologists have pointed out, however, that women are taught to give up their own needs for the sake of others (spouse, family). While self-assertiveness is encouraged in males, it is discouraged in women. The blanket statement about overcoming self-centeredness thus looks very different for males and females, a difference and particularity that is not addressed by Hick.⁹⁶

Other particular issues for women in interreligious dialogue are the images of Ultimate Reality, which are in some religions traditionally male-oriented, in some gender neutral, in others male and female. O'Neil points out: "So far in most of the interreligious dialogue among predominantly male participants, God has rarely if ever been referred to in gender inclusive language."⁹⁷

Maura O'Neill underlines that for women, similar to minorities and the poor, concerns for justice already form a common starting point for action and dialogue, and religion is not apart from practical social aspects of life. For example, two feminist theologians in very different religious locales, articulate shared concerns for justice and equality. The Muslim Riffat Hassan recovers the egalitarian tradition of the Qur'ān as distinguished from cultural messages that have accumulated throughout history and limit women.⁹⁸ For evangelical theologian Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, the message of liberation and social justice within the Bible opens ways to engage in interreligious dialogue.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 27.

⁹⁷ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 41.

⁹⁸ Riffat Hassan, "Women in the Context of Change and Confrontation within Muslim Communities," in Mollenkott, 108.

⁹⁹ Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, "An Evangelical Perspective," in Mollenkott, 66, 70-72.

Besides commonalities, cultural differences between dialogue participants emerge as well. Studies of various cultures indicate that what appear to Western eyes to be oppressive practices toward women may not be interpreted as such by the women themselves from within a culture.¹⁰⁰ For example, the veil, often in the West understood as a symbol of repression, may be understood by Muslim women as a sign of women's self-assertion against imported Westernism; adherence to modest dress standards is perceived as a guard against the exploitation of the female body by a male dominated culture.¹⁰¹ These differences of social and cultural context need to be acknowledged and explored in interreligious encounters among women.

Feminist and liberation theologians call attention away from particularities of religious traditions to particularities of social context. Doctrinal differences today are less divisive than the differences of power, resources, and the social inequalities that cut across religious divisions. They do not negate differences in religious teachings but discover links and bridges between persons of different faiths in their common and shared living situation. Confronting the seriousness of social problems, such as poverty and violence, they seek to avoid the danger of relativism or isolationism by attempting to establish some common ground for interreligious collaboration in tackling the many urgent global problems.

Liberation Theology and Religious Pluralism. Pluralism is experienced by numerous Christians in the North West as a threat to the Christian identity, but for many people in Asia and Africa pluralism provides a source for the recovery of their own

¹⁰⁰ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 57.

¹⁰¹ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 58.

spiritual and cultural values after centuries of oppression.¹⁰² The North Western societies can learn much from the experience of people in Africa and Asia where different religions have existed side by side for a long time. In Africa, Christianity, Islam, and traditional religions have made up the religious landscape for the past four centuries.¹⁰³ Asia is almost totally (97%) non-Christian, and Asian Christian theologians have engaged other faiths from a minority position.¹⁰⁴ According to Samartha, philosophically at the root of exclusivism is an either-or mindset that separates knowing and being, whereas in the context of India, multiple religions and theologies can be co-existent. It seems that the Asian context and the influence of Hindu concepts with an emphasis on the unknowability, unthinkability, inexhaustibility of Truth and Being can make a contribution to interreligious dialogue which is foreign to Western patterns of thought which seem to dominate the conceptualizations of interreligious dialogue.¹⁰⁵

Kenneth Surin, a Malaysian theologian, points away from doctrinal differences between the religious traditions to disconnections and junctures between the North and the South, based on political and economic power differences. He feels that a global theology of religions ignores the dominance of the West and makes invisible the local situation of persons in the Southern Hemisphere who struggle with poverty. Surin sees an academic approach to a theology of religions as deculturated and warns of a monological pluralism that speaks well of the other but never to the other and domesticates the other in

¹⁰² Samartha, *One Christ*, 8.

¹⁰³ Arnold C. Temple, "Inter-Faith Praxis in the African Continent," *Voices from the Third World* 25, nos.1-2 (2000) : 49.

¹⁰⁴ Rohan Silva, "Inter-Faith Dialogue in the Context of Asia," *Voices from the Third World* 25, nos.1-2 (2000) : 64.

¹⁰⁵ Samartha, *One Christ*, 140.

the name of world ecumenism.¹⁰⁶ He urges a discourse that is not so much focused on doctrinal issues and is carried out only in conjunction with an understanding of the social locations of those who participate in the dialogue. He points out difficulties of dialogue with partners from different contexts, given the history and presence of domination of the North over the South. Surin thus brings to the forefront disconnections and separations of conversation partners and urges for attention to social and power dynamics.

Samartha points to the connections of Christianity and Western colonialism. The relationship between the North and the South is not only marked by economic injustice but also by a theological injustice in the relationship between Christianity, a nominal religion of the powerful North, and other religions followed by many people in the poorer South. The refusal to recognize that neighbors of other faiths live by their own cherished beliefs and values is a more serious form of injustice than the merely economic.¹⁰⁷ While in recent decades many Christians have initiated dialogue with people of other faiths, it needs to be considered that these dialogue situations are shaped by the present economic domination of the North as well as the history of Christian conversion practices and of colonial control. Therefore, members of other faiths meet Christian invitations to dialogue with caution and suspicion.¹⁰⁸

Knitter understands global suffering, experienced in poverty, ecological destruction, victimization in military conflict and war, as well as unjust distribution of

¹⁰⁶ Kenneth Surin, "A 'Politics of Speech': Religious Pluralism in the Age of the McDonald's Hamburger," in D'Costa, 196, 200.

¹⁰⁷ Samartha, *One Christ*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Samartha provides a few glimpses of how these dialogues are experienced by members of other faith traditions as well as initiatives of dialogue in other religious traditions. See Samartha, *One Christ*, 22-31.

resources, as a hermeneutical kairos that makes a new encounter of religions both possible and necessary.¹⁰⁹ Knitter affirms that these different faces of suffering call for a response of religions who can contribute symbols and narratives of hope.¹¹⁰ He proposes a model of correlational and globally responsible interreligious dialogue. The model recognizes equal rights and possible universal validity of all religions while global responsibility refers to the commitment to eco-human well-being as the ground for dialogue.¹¹¹ He understands this praxis-oriented, this-worldly model of dialogue as a hermeneutical link by which religions can bridge their incommensurability.¹¹² Rohan Silva sees a starting point and context for interreligious dialogue in the struggles of the poor and the marginalized.¹¹³

The concern for justice includes a concern for the earth. Rosemary Radford Ruether illustrates with several examples from the major religious traditions how religious worldviews of hierarchy of spiritual over material, male over female, elites over untouchables, salvation as a related to the individual soul only, as well as understandings of ritual purity and impurity have consequences for environmental ethics and thus how religious views have contributed to abuse among humans as well as abuse of nature by humans.¹¹⁴ The traditional interpretation of Gen 1:26 that ascribes the human being

¹⁰⁹ Knitter, One Earth, 58.

¹¹⁰ Knitter, One Earth, 71.

¹¹¹ Knitter, One Earth, 54.

¹¹² Knitter, "Common Ground," 111-122.

¹¹³ Silva, 66. Josef Esterman underscores that the starting point for dialogue is the real social and cultural praxis of people, their "popular" religions and "syncretisms". It also means an option for the "poor religions", which are under pressure by a dominant orthodoxy or by a homogenized global culture. See Esterman, 25.

¹¹⁴ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 47ff.

“dominion” over the earth and its living beings as control of human over nature and an anthropocentric worldview is a famous but only one example.¹¹⁵ As many religious traditions have contributed to the view of women as second class citizens, they have also contributed to the exploitation of the earth. Yet, these same religious traditions have the potential to retrieve ecological values that cultivate reverence and respect for the non-human world, fostering a sense of interconnectedness with creation, resulting in moral ecological action. Religious communities can use their moral authority, their constituencies, building and material resources to promote an individual and communal lifestyle of ecological sustainability.¹¹⁶

As liberationist and feminist theologians see the possibility of interreligious encounters in cooperative tending to suffering on a global and local level, there is a link to pastoral theology that responds to suffering in the lives of communities and individuals in an increasingly religiously pluralistic context. The connections between pastoral theology and liberation theology are further explored in Chapter 4.

Towards a Practical Theology of Interreligious Encounters

Theological Foundation

Summarizing the different approaches to religious pluralism above, I will for a moment take up the metaphor of the patchwork quilt again. This time, the creating of a quilt, the quilting bee, represents the encounter of different religious traditions, each contributing different pieces of fabric and scraps. I imagine the different theologians

¹¹⁵ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 45.

¹¹⁶ Ruether, Integrating Ecofeminism, 81.

introduced above involved in the quilting bee, each contributing their concerns about how to design and create the quilt. I imagine Hick seeing a correlation between the design of individual patches and the outline of the quilt. He is concerned with laying out the patches so they bring forth their unifying design. Smith highlights the seams and how the patches can be connected and sown together. Lindbeck and Heim emphasize how different the fabrics and materials of the patches are from each other so that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to piece them together. Cobb as well underscores the very different qualities in design and material of the patches, but values and encourages the quilting process. He emphasizes that the participants will not know ahead of time what the end product will look like, but is confident they will be enriched and transformed through the shared project. Panikkar also emphasizes the value of the quilting process. He sees each patch as part of the whole quilt. All patches are needed. In the quilting project as well, everyone has an important role, and the different members depend on each other and enrich each other. Knitter, O'Neill, Radford Ruether and Suchoki as well as other liberation and feminist theologians acknowledge the different qualities of the patches as well, but emphasize the urgency to get to work with the quilt project. They would emphasize the shared purpose of the quilting process: to use the quilts for the fixing of big holes in the global fabric or to provide comfort and warmth to people in need. The scraps they would contribute would have stains of tears and blood for they come from places of suffering and have been used already to patch up holes in the fabric of local situations.

My own position is informed by Cobb's and Panikkar's as well as liberation and feminist approaches and focuses on the *praxis of the encounter* of persons of different

religious traditions. In the following paragraphs I put forth a *practical theology of interreligious encounters*. By practical theology I mean theological reflection that relates Christian teachings on the one hand to the contemporary situation of a globalized and pluralist social context, and on the other hand to the human experience of such encounters.¹¹⁷ Practical theology, thus is not understood as applied theology, but as a theological and methodological reflection of the praxis of interreligious encounters. It integrates systematic theology and insights from the social sciences. My practical theology of interreligious encounters is summarized in the following theses.

(1) I begin with a stance of realistic humility. God is the Mystery and can never be grasped. Our knowledge is always limited by our particular context. No tradition, therefore, can claim absolute universal normativity. Because reality is so complex, it is only appropriate that the different patches of religious traditions are so different in material and design. The incongruence and diversity of materials, colors, and patterns makes up the complex beauty of the quilt. As mortal human beings we will never see the patchwork quilt completed; important for now is the process of collaboration in creating the quilt.

(2) With Cobb and Panikkar I see in the symbols of Christ and the Trinity not obstacles but pathways to open encounters with those of other religious traditions. The symbols communicate within the Christian tradition the central notion of God's participation in human life and the opening of God's self to human participation in God's life. They depict reality through the particular lens of the Christian tradition. The quality of reality communicated in these symbols is that of relationality and community in

¹¹⁷ Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat, Practical Theology and Qualitative Research (London: SCM Press, 2006), 5,17,24.

diversity. The symbols of Incarnation and Trinity contribute to the discourse of religious pluralism a concern with relationship and call Christians to reach out to those who are different from themselves. In other words, because the Christian tradition is grounded in an affirmation of God's relatedness, its particular patch invites the quilting process.

A practical theology of religious pluralism therefore gives special attention to the interreligious *encounter*. The dialogue with the religiously Other, mutual listening, learning and transformation, is a spiritual practice, a practice of faith.¹¹⁸ Therefore it is necessary to give attention to the quality and facilitation of the relationship. The fabric and design of the patches are shaped by social and intergroup dynamics as much as by theological dynamics.¹¹⁹ People bring not only their different religious convictions but also their experiences from their different social and cultural contexts to the encounter. The encounter is shaped by common experiences and interconnections as well. Power dynamics are present in human relationships and with them the danger that some particularities would be assimilated or minimized. Fear, prejudice, and ignorance are natural ingredients of interreligious relationships as well. Therefore, a practical theology of interreligious encounters needs to give attention to these interpersonal, intergroup, and social dynamics and involve an interdisciplinary discourse. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will include pastoral theological and social psychological perspectives and address the socio-cultural and intergroup factors in interreligious relationships. Speaking within the image of the patchwork quilt, particular attention must be given not only to the quality of the patches but the quilting process and its dynamics as well.

¹¹⁸ Panikkar, *Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics*, 243.

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 4, "The Analysis of Power Dynamics," and Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

(3) The work and life of Jesus of Nazareth communicates as well relationality and community in diversity in the symbol of the reign of God, a community of well-being and inclusion for all. I agree with liberation and feminist theologies in that relativism needs to be avoided. The symbol of the reign of God motivates the development of a “glocal responsibility,” a cultural disposition towards the world, a sense of responsibility toward the globe and an appreciation of its diversity. While the religious traditions have real differences, our common ground is in our common humanity and the shared problems we face as human beings. Persons from different religious traditions can work together to tackle problems of violence and oppression, poverty, and ecological destruction globally and locally. Addressing human suffering, such as illness, crisis, and death, spiritual care givers can assist and be present with persons of different religious tradition in need of support. As people from diverse religious communities join forces to tend to suffering, they can find provisional points of connections, where scraps of materials can be pieced together to patch up holes in the global fabric, to tend to suffering in local communities as well as personal lives. Here, liberation theology and a theology of care share concerns. Both address concrete experiences of suffering, one in the socio-political context, the other in the context of personal lives.¹²⁰ Spiritual care to individual persons and communities is connected to and rooted in care of and responsibility for the eco-human well-being of all.

A “glocal responsibility”, an openness for the diversity of the world includes the concern with the tears and holes within interreligious relationships themselves. The

¹²⁰ See Chapter 4, “A Liberationist Approach,” of this dissertation.

suffering caused by prejudice and discrimination because of religious imperialism needs to be addressed by a practical theology of interreligious encounters.¹²¹

(4) Because of the urgency of global problems and because, according to Christian teachings, the call to participation in the realm of God includes all, a practical theology of interreligious encounters needs to imagine learning processes that involve people at the grassroots level. In other words, the interreligious quilting bee needs to move beyond the academic level and involve local and institutional clergy as well as persons in local churches, synagogues, temples, mosques, and citizens at the grassroots level.¹²²

Therefore, a practical theology of interreligious encounters needs to develop a glocal didactic, learning processes and methods that equip members of religious communities to develop a “glocal responsibility” and to engage the religiously Other with openness. Thus, a glocal didactic is an interdisciplinary enterprise engaging the social sciences in order to understand more deeply socio-cultural and intergroup relations dynamics at work in interreligious encounters.

Methodological Considerations

After having developed a theological foundation, I will describe some methods of interreligious encounters. They are partly informed by experiences shared by feminist and liberationist theologians. The following chapters of this dissertation will integrate a social science perspective to flesh out these methodological principles.

¹²¹ See Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

¹²² See Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 of this dissertation.

Basically there are three common forms of interreligious encounters: theological exchange, dialogue in action, and shared religious experience in spiritual practice.¹²³ A predominant Western approach to interreligious dialogue is the exchange about theological concepts and doctrinal issues. Persons involved in interreligious dialogue are often scholars and religious leaders. However, in order to address the many local and global problems of suffering, interreligious dialogue needs to move beyond academia to local churches, mosques, synagogues, and temples. Because persons of different faith traditions *encounter* each other in public institutions and local neighborhoods, for example, they do not only and perhaps not even primarily share their theological and doctrinal convictions, but meet on a social, interpersonal, and existential level. Therefore a didactic of interreligious encounters needs to be holistic in its approach and mindful to speak not only to the mind but also to emotions, senses, and behavior of participants.

Shared Experience. Dialogue should begin with the concrete experiences of participants and can include personal stories and participation in the symbols and ritual practices of neighbors from other religious traditions.

Maura O'Neill contends that there is a need for women to talk first amongst themselves before entering the wider interreligious discussion.¹²⁴ She suggests that women in interreligious dialogue begin by sharing *personal narratives*, which provide a concrete and personal headway into their particular cultural and religious perspectives. Some of the approaches to dialogue put forth by Hick and others seem to look for common ground among religions via abstraction to a common principle. However, this

¹²³ Knitter, One Earth, 152.

¹²⁴ O'Neill, "Examining Gender Issues," 127.

perspective avoids particularity and difference. An equal attention to the women's perspective can help the discussion to remain concrete with attention to particular experience.¹²⁵

Some pluralist theologians give attention to dialogue through the use of *symbol* and imagination. W. C. Smith emphasizes personalist knowledge in interreligious dialogue: For example, the faith of a Buddhist does not disclose itself by looking at a system called 'Buddhism'. One must rather look at the world through Buddhist eyes. Therefore, knowledge can be accessed through symbol and be supplemented with appreciation, imagination and sympathetic insight.¹²⁶ Marianne Moyaert sees in the use of symbol, ritual, and narrative ways to engage imagination and empathy, which enable "crossing over" into the cultural world of another religious tradition. She sees in symbol and narrative tools to move beyond the deadlock of postmodern particularistic concerns and encourages the interreligious movement to make stronger use of these tools.¹²⁷

Samartha points out that different religions place a different emphasis on the writtenness and spokenness of sacred ideas and words. The preferred language for interreligious meetings is often English with its Western concepts of thought and with an emphasis on religious ideas. However, religious life and praxis, symbol and spirituality represent dimensions of high importance to numerous other religions. Many Western Christians seem to be more comfortable with an exchange about ideas but when it comes

¹²⁵ O'Neill, "Examining Gender Issues," 127.

¹²⁶ Smith, Towards a World Theology, 68, 85.

¹²⁷ Marianne Moyaert, "Interreligious Dialogue and the Debate between Universalism and Particularism: Searching for a Way Out of the Deadlock," Studies in Interreligious Dialogue, 15, no. 1 (2005) : 49ff.

to *communal worship and prayer*, they suspect syncretism and are reluctant to engage in common worship.¹²⁸

Thus, a practical theology of interreligious encounters utilizes experiential modes of expression of *communal worship and prayer, symbol, and narrative* so participants can find existential and relational access to other religious traditions.

Tending to Suffering. According to liberation theology the truth is not “known” and then applied but it is in action, in praxis that truth is experienced and validated.¹²⁹ Based on this principle of orthopraxis over orthodoxy, Knitter calls for the development of a shared liberative praxis in interreligious dialogue.¹³⁰ Participants do not begin with discussion of doctrines but the encounter begins with a common activity creating a sense of community and moving interreligious encounters beyond the level of theological experts to the grassroots level.¹³¹

In chapters 5 and 6 I will further develop the idea of religious communities working together under the category “interreligious action projects.” Thomas Michel presents an example of dialogue in action describing the organization MuCARD, Muslim-Christian Agency for Rural Development, in the Southern Philippines. In a context with social and economic problems, ethnic and cultural prejudice with long historic roots 120 village organizations of Muslims and Christians work together for local village development. Their projects are modest, such as collecting money for vehicles or agricultural seminars, or jointly running a day-care program for children. In the process

¹²⁸ Samartha, *One Christ*, 14.

¹²⁹ Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology,” 191.

¹³⁰ Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology,” 196.

¹³¹ Knitter, *One Earth*, 139.

of working together prejudices are slowly being overcome.¹³² In the North Western context, examples of such interreligious action projects are represented by the InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) and the Chicago based organization Interfaith Youth Core. Youth from different religious traditions meet to participate together in social action projects, such as Habitat for Humanity, environmental tasks, such as cleaning up riverbanks, for instance.¹³³ Social action projects represent a basis where youth from different religious traditions come together and develop relationships with each other. Such shared action projects are also conducted as partnerships between different local communities.

Interfaith chaplains and pastoral counselors encounter persons of different faith traditions in public institutions and clinical practice and tend to suffering in personal lives as they struggle with crises, illness, imprisonment, or death. Increasingly, interreligious encounters are part of the work of care and counseling. In chapter 4 I will further develop a concept of interreligious spiritual care and counseling.

Interreligious Encounters and Equality. Dialogue demands equality and requires an awareness of structures of domination and existing inequality sustained by structures of economic, political power. A shared effort to create an ideal speech situation includes an affirmation of our differences as well as of the freedom and dignity of our conversation partner.¹³⁴ Therefore Knitter translates the concept of the “preferential option for the poor” of liberation theology into the principle of the “hermeneutical

¹³² Thomas Michel, “A Variety of Approaches to Interfaith Dialogue,” *Ecumenical Trends* 31, no. 2 (2002) : 1-7.

¹³³ Phone conversation with Mike Goggin, Assistant Director of the IFC, 5 September 2006.

¹³⁴ Knitter, *One Earth*, 86.

privilege of the poor” in the context of the interreligious dialogue. This includes the acknowledgement and remembrance of past religious conflicts in present relationships, such as the history of Anti-Judaism in Christian tradition in relationships between Christians and Jews. Only as those past hurts and injuries are allowed to be addressed, can trust between the communities develop.¹³⁵ The principle of “hermeneutics of suspicion” applied to one’s own theology can help believers to examine one’s own faith as to where it may promote one’s own interest at the expense of others and may maintain superiority and control. The underprivileged have a hermeneutical privilege.¹³⁶ In chapter 4 I will articulate in more detail how issues of power play a role in interreligious relationships and how the “hermeneutics of suspicion” will be applied to overcome Christian normativity.

Gender relations have significance in dialogue situations as well. O’Neill points to two factors that may silence women in interreligious dialogue. First, their more personal ways of self-expression disrupt the dominant male style of communication. Secondly, in numerous cultural contexts public speech is seen as a male domain whereas women are encouraged to listen.¹³⁷ O’Neill encourages a critical evaluation of gender roles and stereotypical behaviors of participants in interreligious dialogue, and an acceptance of a wide range of behaviors for both genders.¹³⁸

Interreligious encounters need an openness to discover difference and work through conflict. She encourages the constructive use of conflict through a respectful

¹³⁵ Knitter also presents the example of Muslim-Hindu relationships in India, *One Earth*, 46.

¹³⁶ Knitter, *One Earth*, 87.

¹³⁷ O’Neill, *Women Speaking*, 47f.

¹³⁸ O’Neill, *Women Speaking*, 49.

recognition of opposing views and open reflection on the positive as well as negative aspects of one's particular religious tradition and how it has influenced their identity.¹³⁹

The search for a common ground among dialogue participants shall not lead to a suppression of difference that domesticates the other. A dialogue situation will bring forth both recognition of commonalities as well as differences and at times opposing views. We should be aware of the temptation to – at least subconsciously – domesticate the other by diminishing differences. We can oppose views of each other without excluding each other from dialogue and relationship.¹⁴⁰ Chapter 5 develops strategies to balance the recognition of difference and commonality in interreligious encounters.

Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter I delineated two major theological pathways to a didactic of interreligious encounters. Both hold the universal and particular in a creative tension. The first pathway utilizes the symbols of Christ and the Trinity to emphasize the interrelatedness of humans (and the cosmos) and to embrace the religiously Other. Reaching deep within the Christian teachings Christians are moved outward, and interreligious dialogue itself becomes a spiritual practice. The second pathway is built on the symbol of the reign of God and emphasizes the collaborative praxis and of global responsibility. The symbol of the reign of God, of well-being for all, motivates members of the Christian faith tradition to join believers of other traditions and to tend to the

¹³⁹ O'Neill, Women Speaking, 99.

¹⁴⁰ Knitter, One Earth, 148.

suffering of the globe, and work for justice and the well-being of the earth. Some major methodological implications of both pathways can be summarized as follows:

(1) The foundation for a didactic of interreligious encounters is not a grand narrative or meta-theory. The difficulty of formulating a common ground for dialogue is apparent. Values such as tending to the suffering, justice, well-being of humans and the earth are abstract and differences in the understanding of these values emerge, as they are fleshed out in concrete situations. It seems, however, that the need to engage in interreligious dialogue presents itself with urgency, especially in light of increasing religious conflicts in recent years. Therefore, we should not sacrifice our desire to connect and cooperate and thus at least look for a common starting point. No grand theory can function as a bridge. The dialogue itself is the bridge. Particular religious traditions share in a common context. A didactic of interreligious encounters is rather a patchwork of concrete projects, patching up what is broken in the world. The methods of dialogue emphasize the existential dimension of religion as well as the relational character of interreligious encounters.

(2) The encounters move beyond the academic level to reach ordinary people and believers of the different traditions. Accordingly, the framework of dialogue shifts from a primary exchange of ideas and teachings to shared experiences in spiritual practice and common action. The dialogue begins with the concrete experiences and struggles of living. Dialogue situations include common worship and spiritual practice. The meaning of another religious tradition is experienced in symbols and ritual and its significance for the dialogue partner.

(3) The dialogue is practical and begins with common action to address concrete issues of living, tending to the suffering of individuals, fighting poverty, and healing ecological destruction on a local level, for example. The interreligious encounter occurs in prison cells, hospital rooms, counseling centers between spiritual care givers and careseekers of different faiths.

(4) Attention is given to unequal dialogue situations in which persons of different social and cultural background as well as women are disadvantaged. Steps are undertaken to empower those with less access to power.

(5) Commonalities and differences need to be held in creative tension. Even theologians such as Knitter and Panikkar who emphasize the integrity of particular traditions, at times seem to blur their distinctiveness. Panikkar identifies a theanthropocosmic vision, a Trinitarian notion, in the great religions, and Knitter sees the vision of soteria as a common ground for religions. One wonders if we cannot but in our desire to connect at times project our own patterns of thinking onto dialogue partners. Perhaps all we can do is acknowledge our projections, expose them in dialogue and be open to clarifications from our dialogue partners. Tendencies to impose one's framework of perception onto the dialogue partner are exposed and addressed. The expression of differences and opposing views need to be addressed.

What can be done to move these values of dialogue beyond the level of an appeal? How can they be practiced and acted upon in concrete interreligious encounters? How can members of religious communities and not just religious leaders and scholars of the different traditions become involved? How can persons be assisted to develop a "glocal responsibility"? How can religious communities contribute to the healing of

wounds of religious prejudice of their neighboring communities? How can spiritual caregivers support persons of other faiths in need? How can social and cultural dynamics at play in interreligious encounters be understood and facilitated constructively? What role do prejudice, fear, and power differences play in keeping persons from openly engaging the religiously Other? In summary, how can we understand and facilitate the practical situations in which interreligious encounters occur?

These questions are relevant if interreligious dialogue shall become a more ordinary and regular practice of religious communities and if principles of shared experiences, shared action, and equality shall come to play. Insights from social psychology help understand the dynamics of relationships between members of different religious groups, including issues, such as prejudice, fear and how to address those. Pastoral theology contributes an understanding of intercultural dynamics as well as helps to conceptualize the caring relationship between persons of different faiths. It is my goal to integrate the different contributions from sociology, theology, social psychology, and pastoral theology in an applied theology, or “glocal didactic” of interreligious encounters. The following chapter draws on research in the field of intercultural pastoral care and counseling to develop a paradigm of interreligious spiritual care.

CHAPTER 4

Applying Patches to the Wounds of the Soul - Interreligious Spiritual Care

Introduction

The following quote stems from a socio-cultural narrative of a male Palestinian Christian CPE student who has lived in the U.S for a number of years. The socio-cultural narrative is an assignment of the CPE curriculum where students and supervisor share in a two page reflection paper how their culture and social class has shaped them as persons. I have developed this curriculum element as one tool to increase cultural awareness.

“I am only twenty-eight, and I feel like I have already been on a very long journey of self-discovery, or perhaps self-confusion. I feel that there are so many complicated factors regarding my identity that I have found it easier to simply assimilate in different contexts rather than being myself – mainly because I have never quite been sure as to who I really am. I am an Arab who is Palestinian. I am a Palestinian who is an Israeli. I am an Israeli who is not fully an Israeli because I am not Jewish. I am not fully an American and not fully an Israeli. Who am I? I am neither Muslim nor Jewish, but a Christian. Tied to the West through my religion and thus not fully Arab. Tied to the East because of my race and thus not fully “Christian.” Arabic is my mother tongue but not my strongest language. I am intimidated when I open my mouth. I’ve lived in the U.S. for the last nine years and have not been with my people through this last wave of terror and violence. Am I really Palestinian? I have a homeland but it’s not really mine. Who am I? Where do I belong? I understand Jewish need for security. I understand Palestinian need for freedom. This is my life as a Christian-Palestinian-Arab-Israeli-American.

This student's reflection demonstrates the aspects of domination, personal, religious, social, and culture are intertwined in the complex web of identity. The student's life story embodies aspects of cultural hybridization as well. As an Arab he is culturally tied to the Middle East while he understands his Christian faith culturally connecting him to the West. An understanding of interreligious encounters goes hand in hand with attention to intercultural issues. This chapter investigates how conceptualizations of intercultural pastoral care and supervision can contribute to an understanding of interreligious encounters in spiritual care. First, some main definitions of intercultural pastoral care and counseling are examined with particular attention to their potential to bear meaning for interreligious spiritual care. Then, exemplified with the praxis of interreligious prayer, I spell out how a glocal responsibility, an affirmation of universality and interconnectedness of diverse people and support of their particularities and differences, can inform interreligious spiritual care.

Review of Relevant Literature

The body of literature in the field of intercultural pastoral care and counseling has grown since the late 1980's and reflects the changing context of the churches in increasingly multicultural societies in the United States and Western Europe. In addition, pastoral caregivers from different continents exchange ideas and concepts in international forums organized by the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling (SIPCC) and the International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling (ICPCC), indicating the heightened awareness of the global context of the discipline.¹

¹ For an overview of different conferences since 1986 see Helmut Weiß, "Die Entdeckung interkultureller Seelsorge: Entwicklung interkultureller Kompetenz in Seelsorge und Beratung durch

In the 1980's David Augsburger presented an influential conceptual approach with his two publications Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures and Conflict Mediation Across Cultures.² More recent concepts have been put forth in the books In Living Color and Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World by Ghanaian pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey.³ The latter work considers globalization, internationalization, and indigenization as three processes that also influence pastoral care and counseling and calls for a contextual analysis of pastoral encounters. The essay collection Globalisation and Difference, edited by Paul Ballard and Pam Couture, addresses diverse pastoral issues in locales throughout the world.⁴ Other theoretical reflections on intercultural pastoral care and counseling are published in Knowledge, Attitude and Experience, edited by Young-Il Kim, the Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge (Handbook of Intercultural Pastoral Care) from the German context and "Intercultural and Inter-Faith Communication" published through the SIPCC.⁵ Selected approaches will be discussed below. A number of books address practical issues of cross-cultural communication and pastoral care for different cultural and ethnic communities in the United States and for the

international Begegnungen," in Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge, ed. Karl Federschmidt, Eberhard Hausschildt, Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht, Klaus Temme, and Helmut Weiß, 17-37, (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 2002).

² David W Augsburger, Pastoral Counseling across Cultures (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986); and Conflict Mediation across Cultures: Pathways and Patterns (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.)

³ Emmanuel Y. Lartey, In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling, 2nd ed. (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003); and Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World. (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2006).

⁴ Paul Ballard, and Pam Couture, eds., Globalisation and Difference: Practical Theology in a World Context (Cardiff, Wales: Cardiff Academic Press, 1999).

⁵ Young-Il Kim, ed., Knowledge, Attitude, and Experience: Ministry in the Cross-Cultural Context (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992); Karl Federschmidt, Eberhard Hauschildt, Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht, Klaus Temme, and Helmut Weiß, eds., Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 2002); "Intercultural and Inter-Faith Communication," Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling 13, 2006.

Christian church in different pastoral contexts throughout the world.⁶ Cross-cultural issues in the context of supervision of ministry are investigated in two symposia in the *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry*, 1992/93 and 2002 as well as in the *Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge*.⁷ Almost all publications focus on pastoral care and counseling within the Christian context. A few articles address non-Christian religions as they represent the cultural context and backdrop of Christian communities in Asia and

⁶ For the U.S. context: Robert C. Leslie, *Counseling across Cultures*. United Ministries In Higher Education UMHE Monograph # 5 (New York: UMHE Communication Office, 1979); Aart M. Van Beek, *Cross-Cultural Counseling*, Creative Pastoral Care and Counseling Series (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996); Eric Law's publications address multicultural issues in congregational care, for example, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993); the discussion between Roslyn Karaban and Richard Voss highlights the possibility and limits of cross-cultural counseling in Karaban, "Cross-Cultural Counseling: Is It Possible? Some Personal Reflections," *Pastoral Psychology* 38, no. 4 (1990) : 219-24; and "Cross-Cultural Pastoral Counseling: Method or Hermeneutic? A Response," *Pastoral Psychology* 40, no. 4 (1992): 265- 70; Richard W. Voss, "Cross-Cultural Pastoral Counseling: Method or Hermeneutic?" *Pastoral Psychology* 40 no. 4. (1992): 253-64.

For the international context: Arbuckle provides a Catholic practical perspective of inculturation of the church in different contexts, whereas Hesselgrave represents an evangelical perspective of counseling in different cultural contexts. Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Earthing the Gospel: An Inculturation Handbook for the Pastoral Workers* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990); David J.Hesselgrave, *Counseling Cross- Culturally: An Introduction to Theory and Practice for Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984).

The essay collections by Farris, Wicks and Estadt, Bohn, and Strange address practical issues of pastoral counseling in different continents. James Reaves Farris, ed., *International Perspectives on Pastoral Counseling* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth Pastoral Press, 2002); Robert J. Wicks and Barry K. Estadt, eds., *Pastoral Counseling in a Global Church: Voices from the Field* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 1993); Carole R. Bohn, *Therapeutic Practice in a Cross-Cultural World: Theological, Psychological, and Ethical Issues*. Journal of Pastoral Care Monograph 7 (Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1995); Otto Strange, ed., *Pastoral Care and Context* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1992).

⁷ Russel F. Seabright, "A Critique of Models of Supervision in Field Education," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 14 (1992/1993) : 155-65; Fredrica R. Halligan, "Supervision in Context: Religious Issues in Cross-Cultural Counseling," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002) : 59-74; Samuel Lee, "The Teacher-Student in Multicultural Theological Education: Pedagogy of Collaborative Inquiry," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002): 81-99; George Tinker, "On Not Requiring CPE for All Lutheran Students: A Letter," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 14 (1992/1993) : 175-79; Martha Randall, "A Study of Black Students' Experiences in Clinical Pastoral Education," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 14 (1992/1993) : 213-24; Therese Becker, "Individualism and the Invisibility of Monoculturalism/Whiteness: Limits to Effective Clinical Pastoral Education Supervision," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002) : 4-20; Helmut Weiß, "Seelsorgeausbildung. Begegnung in der Differenz. Einübung interkultureller Wahrnehmung für Seelsorge und Beratung," in Federschmidt et al. , 262-74.

Africa.⁸ These publications concentrate on pastoral care within the Christian community and non-Christian traditions are considered as a cultural ingredient of the belief systems of Christians in these contexts.

Very few publications address spiritual care and counseling between persons of different religious traditions. Some questions regarding the clinical supervision of Jewish CPE students by Christian supervisors are addressed by Bonita Taylor and David Zucker.⁹ David Larsen and Nina Davis reflect on their experiences as a Christian CPE supervisor and a Zen Buddhist student.¹⁰ Phyllis Toback explores the possibilities of the facilitation of a baptism by a Jewish Chaplain.¹¹ Three works of spiritual care in the Jewish context are available: Jewish Pastoral Care, Pastoral Care and the Jewish Tradition, and To Walk in God's Ways.¹² The German Journal Praktische Theologie put forth an issue on interreligious praxis in 2003. Relevant for pastoral theology are especially a theoretical reflection by Uta Pohl-Patalong and an inquiry about

⁸ For example, Padmasani J. Gallup, "'Subham': The Concept of Wholeness in Pastoral Counselling in the Hindu Cultural Context," in *Strange*, 65-80; Wihemina J. Kalu, "Gospel and Pastoral Counselling in Africa," in *Strange*, 99-118.

⁹ Bonita E. Taylor and David J. Zucker, "What We Wished Our Non-Jewish Supervisors Knew About Us As Jewish Supervisees," Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling 56, no. 4 (2002) : 317-27. See also Howard Sommer, Steven Steinberg, and Gerald Breiger, "Need More Than Unsubstantiated Claims Regarding Jewish Supervisees in CPE," Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling 57, no. 4 (2003) : 467-68.

¹⁰ David J. Larsen, "Supervising in an Interfaith Environment," Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 23 (2003) : 54-59; Nina C. Davis, "Is Multifaith and Multicultural CPE Supervision Possible?" Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 23 (2003) : 60-65.

¹¹ Phyllis Brooks Toback, "A Theological Reflection on Baptism by a Jewish Chaplain," Journal of Pastoral Care 47, no. 3 (1993) : 315-17.

¹² Dayle A. Friedman, ed, Jewish Pastoral Care. A Practical Handbook from Traditional and Contemporary Sources, 2nd ed. (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2005); Robert L. Katz, and Don Browning, eds. Pastoral Care and the Jewish Tradition: Empathic Process and Religious Counseling. Theology and Pastoral Care Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Ozarowski, Joseph S. To Walk in God's Ways: Jewish Pastoral Perspectives on Illness and Bereavement (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995).

interreligious prayer by Hans-Christoph Goßman.¹³ The small literature in the field of interreligious spiritual care may be rooted in a lack of clarity on how to theologically relate to persons of different faiths and thus point to a need for an integration of a theological discourse on religious pluralism.

This chapter pursues a conceptual understanding of spiritual care between persons of different faiths. Because religion and culture are interconnected, some theoretical contributions from the field of intercultural pastoral care and counseling are examined with regard to their possible implications for interreligious pastoral care. In particular, I will consider a cross-cultural perspective,¹⁴ a systems perspective,¹⁵ a hermeneutical approach,¹⁶ and a liberationist perspective.¹⁷ For reasons of concentration the discussion of the literature is limited to intercultural issues in pastoral care and counseling and in particular to one theme that emerges in the literature, socio-cultural analysis, the

¹³ Uta Pohl-Patalong, Uta, "Praktische Theologie interreligiös? Die Vielfalt der Religionen als Herausforderung und Chance für praktisch-theologisches Denken" (Practical Theology- Interreligious? The Plurality of Religions as a Challenge and Chance for Practical Theological Reflection), Praktische Theologie Jahrgang 38, Heft 2 (2003) : 96-108; Hans-Christoph Goßman, "Interreligiöses Gebet," Praktische Theologie Jahrgang 38, Heft 2 (2003): 123-27.

¹⁴ Augsburg, Pastoral Counseling.

¹⁵ Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht, "Was ist Interkulturelle Seelsorge? Eine Praktisch-Theologische Annäherung" (What is Intercultural Pastoral Care? A Practical Theological Approach), in Federsmidt et al, 38-62.

¹⁶ Eberhard Hauschildt, "Seelsorgelehre. Interkulturelle Seelsorge als Musterfall für eine Theorie radikal interaktiver Seelsorge" (Pastoral Theology. Intercultural Pastoral Care as a Case Example for a Theory of Radical Interactive Pastoral Care), in Federsmidt et al, 241-61.

¹⁷ See Lartey, In Living Color; Rebecca S. Chopp and Duane F. Parker, Liberation Theology and Pastoral Theology, JPC Monograph, no. 2 (Decatur, GA: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1990); Bridget Clare McKeever, "Social Systems in Pastoral Care," in Handbook for Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling, ed. Howard W. Stone and William M. Clements, 70-87 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991). For a feminist perspective see Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin, and Julia Strecker, Flügel Trotz Allem: Feministische Seelsorge und Beratung: Konzeption, Methoden, Biographien (Wings In spite of Everything: Feminist Pastoral Care and Counseling: Conceptions, Methods, Biographies), (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999).

perception of difference and power.¹⁸ Its implications for interreligious spiritual care are discussed.

Definitions

Spiritual Care

Within the Christian context the terms pastoral care and counseling and pastoral theology describe a discipline within the larger field of practical theology. The term ‘pastoral’ has roots in the biblical image of the shepherd and describes the concern of the religious community for the person in distress.¹⁹ As the term ‘pastoral care’ is occupied with connotations from the Christian tradition, the term ‘spiritual care’ is more appropriate for the interreligious context and will be used when addressing the helping relationship between persons of different faiths.²⁰ Following Lartey’s definition, spirituality is understood as the integrating center of a person and has at least five dimensions: relationship with transcendence, intra-personal, inter-personal, corporate/communal, spatial (relationships with place and things).²¹

¹⁸ Two articles in *Handbuch Interkulturelle Seelsorge*, ed. Karl Federschmidt et al. consider socio-cultural analysis: James Poling, “Wahrnehmung kultureller Differenz und die Machtfrage: Drei Stufen kultureller Analyse” (Perception of Cultural Difference and the Question of Power: Three Steps of Cultural Analysis), 63-78, and Helmut Weiß, “Seelsorgeausbildung: Begegnung in der Differenz: Einübung interkultureller Wahrnehmung für Seelsorge und Beratung” (Teaching Pastoral Care: Encountering Difference: Practice of Intercultural Perception for Pastoral Care and Counseling), 262-74.

¹⁹ Liston O. Mills, “Pastoral Care: History, Traditions, and Definitions,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, ed. Rodney Hunter et al., 836-44 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

²⁰ Friedman, xvi.

²¹ Lartey, *In Living Color*, 141.

Intercultural Spiritual Care

While the term ‘cross-cultural’ is widely used in the literature, the term ‘intercultural’ expresses more appropriately the aspects of mutuality and interrelatedness in the intercultural encounter.²² Emmanuel Lartey distinguishes between monocultural, cross-cultural, multicultural, and intercultural paradigms of pastoral care and counseling. Monocultural counseling universalizes particular norms, values and cultural beliefs, while cross-cultural counseling tends to essentialize cultural difference.²³ A cross-cultural approach overemphasizes the identity and homogeneity of cultural and ethnic groups and insufficiently explores the complexity and fluidity of cultures. Multi-culturalism emphasizes information about other cultures and can easily be misused to an oversimplification of cultural dynamics.

Lartey’s understanding of culture is congruent with the definition used in this study. Taking up the cultural anthropological definition of culture put forth in Chapter 1, culture can be understood with the metaphor of “human software” and refers to behaviors and beliefs that are learned and shared. Culture refers to commonality as well as diversity and is not confined to historical and territorial boundaries, but is always open and fluid.²⁴ On the one hand such an open understanding of culture encourages the possibility of intercultural interaction, on the other hand it articulates how fundamentally we are shaped

²² Kathleen Greider, “From Multiculturalism to Interculturality: Demilitarizing the Border between Personal and Social Dynamics through Spiritual Receptivity,” Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 22 (2002) : 41.

²³ Lartey, In Living Color, 164, 168; Emmanuel Y. Lartey “Pastoral Counseling in Multi-Cultural Contexts,” in Farris, 317, 322-28.

²⁴ Nederveen Pieterse, 46, 78.

through culture and how significant attention to “cultural programs” is in the pastoral interaction. Lartey understands culture as fluid; there is a continual interplay resulting in dynamism, adaptability, and reinterpretation. Of course, persons often do not endorse all aspects of their particular culture.²⁵ Intercultural pastoral care and counseling does not systemize different voices into overarching theories but “ponders the glorious variety and chaotic mystery of human experience.”²⁶ Intercultural pastoral care understands persons within their social, cultural, political contexts and emphasizes the careseeker’s authentic participation in the pastoral interaction who express their perceptions and beliefs on their own terms.²⁷

After this clarification of terms the following section examines selected major definitions of pastoral care and counseling in a culturally diverse context. The conceptualizations are considered with regard to their implications for interreligious spiritual care.

Major Approaches to Pastoral Care and Counseling in a Culturally Diverse Context

A Cross-Cultural Approach

David Augsburger defines pastoral counseling as

a liberating and healing ministry of the faith community that is based on a relationship between a pastor (or a pastoring team) with counseling skills and a family or person who come together to engage in conversation and interaction. The relationship is a dynamic process of caring and exploration, with a definite structure and mutually contracted goals, and

²⁵ Lartey, In Living Color, 31.

²⁶ Lartey, In Living Color, 32.

²⁷ Lartey, In Living Color, 33.

occurs within the tradition, beliefs, resources of the faith community that surrounds and supports them.²⁸

Augsburger's unique and influential contribution to intercultural pastoral care and counseling is the introduction of the concept 'interpathy'. He defines interpathy as an intentional, cognitive envisioning and affective experiencing of another's thoughts and feelings. Counselors are not value free but their own values are temporarily bracketed. In a commitment to hospitality they move between worlds by "crossing over and coming back."²⁹ Cultural competencies include an awareness of the counselors' own assumptions and values, the ability to assess personal and contextual factors, and the flexible use of various counseling skills. While his awareness of cultural issues has raised the consciousness of professionals in the field, Augsburger depicts a theological ideal of the counselor with little attention to the difficulties involved, such as stereotypes and power differences in the counseling relationship.³⁰ He lacks a deeper examination of systemic social and power dynamics in which both, counselor and counselee, participate. Lartey expresses concern that Augsburger's cross-cultural approach encourages an "us-and-them" mentality, according to which we (the dominant white Europeans/ Americans) are crossing over to them (the rest) and then return.³¹

Augsburger briefly addresses issues of interfaith dialogue in the context of intercultural counseling. He leaves out a discussion of religious pluralism and holds a christocentric and inclusivist understanding of the relationship to other religious

²⁸ Augsburger, Pastoral Counseling, 15.

²⁹ Augsburger, Pastoral Counseling, 20, 29, 36.

³⁰ See also Schneider-Harpprecht, 46.

³¹ Lartey, In Living Color, 167.

traditions.³² Augsburgers sees the possibility of crossing over, “even in our most valued and sacred regions of faith.”³³ He does not, however, provide a reflection on what the crossing over into another religion looks like. Implications for the counseling practice are not addressed.

A Hermeneutical Approach

Eberhard Hauschildt, German professor of Practical Theology, integrates concerns of feminist and liberationist approaches and understands the pastoral encounter as an interaction in which the voices of both counselor and counselee meet each other. He proposes a radical interactive hermeneutic model: the worlds of the helper and the person seeking pastoral care - with the different values, ideas and culturally shaped understanding and communication patterns - have to be interconnected without one being taken over in a dogmatic theological or psychotherapeutic model.³⁴ What is developed is a shared mosaic of interpretations, which connects both cultures without negating or leveling one of them.³⁵ As long as the counselor monopolizes the interpretation of the encounter, there is no equal interaction. Thus, it is important to give attention to power dynamics within the pastoral relationship – as the caregiver controls his or her power position by abstaining from judgments and allowing the partner to express his or her

³² He does not label his own position as such but implies it in his support of a position that sees the cross as a symbol in the core of God’s self-revelation. Augsburgers, Pastoral Counseling, 45.

³³ Augsburgers, Pastoral Counseling, 46.

³⁴ Hauschildt, 249.

³⁵ Hauschildt, 253. See also Augsburgers, Pastoral Counseling, 41.

associations and feelings.³⁶ Such radical interaction requires from the counselor self-awareness, awareness of cultural patterns as well as the individuality of the person who may not completely fit into such patterns.³⁷ If the pastoral encounter is only defined within the framework of the Christian counselor, the possibility of Buddhist, Jewish, or Muslim spiritual care is left out as well as a reflection about the spiritual care between persons of different faiths.³⁸ While Hauschildt does not elaborate on religious difference in the pastoral encounter, his model provides room for the development of interreligious spiritual care.

A Multi-Systems Approach

The pastoral theologian Larry Kent Graham incorporates a systemic perspective in the ministry of care. His book Care of Persons, Care of Worlds does not explicitly deal with intercultural issues; however, systems analysis underscores a holistic approach considering persons' relationship to society, culture, and nature, and thus is applicable to intercultural care and counseling.³⁹ Pastoral care from a systemic perspective attempts to understand, stabilize, and modify the interpersonal reciprocal transactions as well as relationships between individuals and their environments.⁴⁰ Thus, one of the principles of psychosystemic caregiving is the principle of conscientization: Pastoral counselors help

³⁶ Hauschildt, 253.

³⁷ Hauschildt, 258.

³⁸ Hauschildt, 252, n. 29.

³⁹ Larry Kent Graham, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 39.

⁴⁰ Graham, 40.

the careseekers to develop an awareness of the impact of the social order on their personal difficulties and to develop strategies to neutralize or transform destructive elements in their social context. Thus, pastoral caregivers and careseekers engage together in reflection and action in relation to the larger systemic environment. This includes a reflection of power dynamics. Thus, therapeutic insight includes an awareness of the social context.⁴¹

German pastoral theologian Christoph Schneider-Harpprecht includes a systemic perspective and defines intercultural pastoral care as culturally sensitive Christian help to individuals and groups of the Christian community and to those outside who seek support. It assists persons as they manage their lives within their ecosystems.⁴² Schneider-Harpprecht seeks to broaden the traditional existential pastoral care paradigm, which focuses on the autonomy of the individual personality and self, by including a social systems approach.⁴³ Utilizing liberationist concepts of empowerment he sees pastoral care givers as advocates for the freedom and participation of the conversation partners.⁴⁴ Thus, Schneider-Harpprecht's concept allows room to utilize contributions from narrative therapy, cognitive therapy, short-term therapy, family systems therapy as well as ethno-psychoanalysis when concrete problems and concrete solutions with accompanying support are approached.⁴⁵ He aims for a holistic approach that understands

⁴¹ Graham, 47.

⁴² Schneider-Harpprecht, 47ff.

⁴³ Schneider-Harpprecht, 47. See also Graham, 40, 43.

⁴⁴ Schneider-Harpprecht, 49.

⁴⁵ Schneider-Harpprecht, 59.

the other person as well as pastoral interventions within multiple systems of the psychic, religious and social context.⁴⁶

Schneider-Harpprecht clearly locates pastoral care within the Christian community, as this tradition determines the helper's motivation and attitude toward the counselee as well as the form of the help offered.⁴⁷ He stresses the respect for values and beliefs of those who receive help from the Christian helper but does not appear to imagine that the helper tries to move into the religious world of the person seeking help, or that the helper might work together with a religious leader from a tradition of the person seeking help. The question remains how participatory pastoral care can exist when the caregiver will not move an inch beyond the comfort zone of his or her own religious system. How can such pastoral care empower the person receiving care when the recipient's religious tradition has no impact on the helper's attitude or form of help?

A Liberationist Approach

Pastoral and liberation theologies have been brought into dialogue, as both address the concrete experience of suffering, one focusing on the personal, the other on the socio-political dimension. Liberation theology can provide tools to understand persons in the context of the structures that affect their lives and images of themselves: racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, capitalism, and militarism, for example. Social

⁴⁶ Schneider-Harpprecht, 43.

⁴⁷ Schneider-Harpprecht, 50.

analysis is a method of uncovering the roots and causes of “life-blocking processes” and as such a necessary tool for pastoral counseling.⁴⁸

Emmanuel Lartey develops his intercultural approach to pastoral care and counseling in reliance on liberation theology. liberation theology and pastoral care can enter into a constructive dialogue as both share concerns: both respond to human suffering from a religious perspective, name sources of suffering, and seek to transform suffering through a vision of a better world expressed in religious symbols and actions.⁴⁹ Both start with concrete experience and seek to address the suffering of people in real situations, one focusing on the personal, one of the political dimension. Liberation theology, as well as pastoral care, emphasizes the need for persons to have the power to define their own experiences on their own terms in order to promote liberation and transformation.⁵⁰ Liberation theology can help pastoral care to include social analysis and a social systems perspective.⁵¹ Pastoral theology still needs to develop more skill in analyzing social structures that cause suffering in order to not collude with the very same structures. On the other hand, pastoral theology can contribute an understanding of psychological trauma caused by problems in the social fabric.⁵² As Lartey utilizes liberation theology he adds the activities of “liberating” and “empowering” to the classical notions of pastoral functions - healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling, and nurturing. Liberating addresses the move outside of multiple bondages, such as

⁴⁸ McKeever, 76.

⁴⁹ Chopp and Parker, 8.

⁵⁰ Lartey, *In Living Color*, 123-126.

⁵¹ McKeever, 76; 87; Chopp and Parker, 9.

⁵² Lartey, *In Living Color*, 127.

internalization of oppression, for example. Empowering assists persons to move beyond enforced and internalized helplessness and help them discover resources in themselves, utilize community support, engage in consciousness raising and organizing service activities.⁵³

Empowerment as a function of pastoral counseling is also emphasized by feminist pastoral theologians Ursula Riedel-Pfäfflin and Julia Strecker. They direct the perceptions of counselors away from a one-sided focus on pathology and deficit to a resource orientation.⁵⁴ Clients are empowered to recognize their own agency and power and discover their potential, solutions and coping mechanisms they have used in the past and that helped them in other life situations.

According to Lartey's definition, pastoral care

consists of helping activities, participated in by people who recognize a transcendent dimension to human life, which, by the use of verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect, literal or symbolic modes of communication, aims at preventing, relieving or facilitating persons coping with anxieties. Pastoral care seeks to foster people's growth as full human beings together with the development of ecologically and socio-politically holistic communities in which all persons may live humane lives.⁵⁵

Lartey's definition allows room for non-Christian notions of the divine, and James Poling reports that he has been criticized for de-emphasizing a christo-centric focus in favor of cultural and religious relativism.⁵⁶ While his approach does not present a full-fledged

⁵³ Lartey, *In Living Color*, 67f.

⁵⁴ Riedel-Pfäfflin and Strecker, 34.

⁵⁵ Lartey, *In Living Color*, 31.

⁵⁶ James Poling, "Forword," in Lartey, *In Living Color*, 12. Lartey, for example, presents a case in which a pastoral intervention integrates African traditional beliefs and ritual with Christian beliefs as the persons seeking support are shaped by both influences. Ibid. 158.

reflection about issues of interreligious care, his approach opens doors to interreligious dialogue in the context of pastoral care and counseling.

The Need to Develop a Paradigm for Interreligious Spiritual Care

The brief overview of some major approaches to intercultural pastoral care and counseling demonstrates that little attention has been given so far to a conceptualization of spiritual care between persons of different religious traditions. The inhibition level to engage difference appears to be higher with religion than with culture. Perhaps, different religious beliefs and practices seem to be even more foreign and overwhelming to pastoral caregivers and clinical supervisors than different cultural practices, as they are confronted with different truth claims in other religious traditions. The gap in the pastoral theological literature points to a need for deeper theological reflection of religious pluralism and interreligious encounters in the field of pastoral theology.

The different conceptualizations of intercultural care delineated above do not explicitly address interreligious spiritual care. Augsburg's examination of interfaith dialogue in the context of pastoral care is marginal and incomplete. Schneider-Harpprecht draws the boundaries of pastoral care as within the Christian context. According to Schneider-Harpprecht's definition the pastoral caregiver is open to engage in different cultural perceptions and dialogue about different religious values. However, the form of help offered is clearly shaped by the Christian value system.⁵⁷ The careseeker from a different faith may choose to interact with the Christian pastoral care giver or not, but the Christian caregiver does not move into the religious world of the seeker. However, intercultural pastoral care cannot remain unaffected by the religion of the conversation

⁵⁷ Schneider-Harpprecht, 50.

partner. Lartey's and Hauschildt's definitions both hold the possibility of non-Christian notions of the Divine. Both approaches inform my own definition of interreligious spiritual care. Before I develop it, however, I will turn to another important factor. Intercultural spiritual care includes an integration of the social context. The following section will explore the significance of socio-cultural analysis and power in intercultural care and, closing, I will present my own definition of interreligious spiritual care.

Socio-cultural Analysis

As delineated in Chapter 2, theologians from the Southern hemisphere as well as feminist theologians have pointed to the importance of issues of social context, power, and difference in interreligious dialogue. These issues have been raised as well in the context of intercultural pastoral care. This section highlights a few approaches and considers implications for pastoral care and its supervision. One of the implications of an integration of liberationist and systemic concepts in pastoral care is the inclusion of a socio-cultural analysis in the assessment and understanding of the pastoral and supervisory relationship.

The Perception of Difference

Helmut Weiß, who has developed steps toward a socio-cultural analysis, begins with an acknowledgement of difference and of respectful curiosity: "This person is different from me and I don't know anything about her or him."⁵⁸ The exploration of cultural difference then seeks to understand the other person's language and symbols,

⁵⁸ Weiß, "Seelsorgeausbildung," 266.

patterns of social behavior, family relationships, religious questions and meaning, values and beliefs, as well as how they approach transitions in life.⁵⁹ The third movement explores how the relationship between caregiver and the person seeking care can be shaped in light of the difference.⁶⁰

Pastoral caregivers may encounter different belief systems, even within Christianity that they find difficult to engage. In some cultures of the Southern hemisphere, modern and traditional, Christian and indigenous, beliefs co-exist.⁶¹ Immigrants may utilize the support of indigenous healers, such as curanderos among Mexican Americans, folk healers, and shamans among some Asian cultures, along with Western medicine and clergy. The belief in good and bad spirits that intervene in persons' lives is alive and meaningful for many persons. Robert Solomon seeks to avoid the extremes of rejection of this world view and of uncritical acceptance which overlooks socio-ethical problems that may be connected with such a belief. A third approach of accommodation accepts the belief system for the patient but reserves for oneself scientific psychological and sociological patterns of understanding. That may lead to condescending attitude, which in the end does not really take seriously the belief of the other person.⁶² As an alternative Solomon suggests *critical openness*: an attitude that

⁵⁹ Weiß, "Seelsorgeausbildung," 270ff.

⁶⁰ Weiß, "Seelsorgeausbildung," 273.

⁶¹ Robert Solomon, "Ostasien: Unterwegs auf den Straßen des Übernatürlichen: Die Geisterwelt in der Seelsorge" (East Asia: Underway of the Streets of the Supernatural: The Spirit World in Pastoral Care), in Federschmidt et al, 203.

⁶² Solomon, 211-13.

does not dismiss the ontological belief in spirits and respects the traditional position. It means patience in trying to understand and observe.⁶³

Hausschildt addresses the challenges of engaging the culturally other: The pastoral counselor may feel powerless and overwhelmed with the task of assisting a person whose world is so foreign. At times she or he may move between xenophobia, fear of the other, and xenophilia, an uncritical embrace of what is foreign out of fascination of the exotic.⁶⁴ Radical interaction includes attention to the importance of non-verbal communication as well as an awareness of the cultural influence on projections, transference, and countertransference.⁶⁵ Attention to cultural difference includes a flexibility to utilize different forms of interaction. When working with Latino Catholic patients, for example, a chaplain may be more effective when utilizing not only conversation but non-verbal means of communication, such as gestures and rituals. Lartey's definition of intercultural pastoral care includes an explicit reference to non-verbal modes of communication and thus is inclusive of non-Western cultures with a stronger emphasis on ritual.⁶⁶ Intercultural spiritual care thus includes an attitude of critical openness toward different belief systems as well as an openness and flexibility to utilize different modes of communication, including non-verbal means and ritual.

⁶³ He sees delineation of concrete praxis an area of further research. See Solomon, 214ff.

⁶⁴ Hauschildt, 241 ff.

⁶⁵ Hauschildt, 260, 254.

⁶⁶ Also Hauschildt, 260.

The Analysis of Power Dynamics

James Poling emphasizes the need for an understanding of cultural difference, which he understands, however, also in terms of power dynamics. Thus, power structures along with race, gender, and culture, are taken into consideration.⁶⁷ When professional counselors are identified with the dominating power (patriarchal, white) they easily underestimate the level of injustice which influences the life of their clients. Cultural normativity often is unconscious, denies minorities their cultural identity and destroys them at the deepest spiritual level.⁶⁸ One strategy to keep power imbalances in check is transparency. Pastoral counselors can bring cultural differences at play in the pastoral relationship to the surface. They can share their perceptions and interventions and invite counselees to reflect on the pastoral relationship together.⁶⁹

Several observations with regard to cultural normativity in the context of Clinical Pastoral Education have been offered in two symposia in the Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry, 1992/93 and 2002. Especially voices from ethnic minorities point to the cultural norms reflected in the CPE curriculum that favor western, individualistic, white values and can be oppressive to those from different backgrounds. Examples are the focus on the uncritical and unreflected utilization of self-disclosure and confrontation, which can disempower students from high-context cultures valuing more indirect ways of communication. Often students from minority cultures have to explain their cultural style,

⁶⁷ Poling, "Wahrnehmung," 69.

⁶⁸ Poling, 74. Russel Seabright points to the significance of the social location in clinical supervision which considers, culture, gender, class locations of supervisees and supervisors. If those locations remain unaware, what has been "good supervision" in one context can become oppressive in another. See Seabright, 156.

⁶⁹ Pfäfflin and Strecker, 33.

as the normativity of whiteness remains unconscious.⁷⁰ Stronger attention to cultural competency has been addressed more recently in the ACPE Standards for pastoral and supervisory competency.⁷¹

Within the context of interreligious spiritual care, not only cultural normativity but also *Christian normativity* is often unconscious, as shall be illustrated with the following two examples.

James, a Roman Catholic chaplain intern refers to his two Jewish peers during group sessions repeatedly as his “sisters” and refers to the “Old Testament” as the Bible he and his peers have in common. He is unaware that he minimizes their *particular* religious identity and categorizes their sacred texts of the Hebrew Bible as secondary by labeling them as ‘old’. He incorporates the other religious tradition into his own Christian value system without stretching himself to more accurately understand his peers. He glosses over his discomfort with difference and maintains his image of himself as reaching out to his peers of a different faith group.

Mark, a Christian chaplain, plans a service for the hospital patients, families, and staff in his community hospital during the winter holidays. The hospital population has a considerable percentage of Jewish patients. Because the Christmas season and Chanukah holidays overlap in the calendar, Mark calls a local rabbi to invite him to facilitate together an interfaith-holiday-service with a generic theme of ‘light’. The rabbi explains

⁷⁰ George Tinker makes this point with regard to Native American students. Tinker, 177ff; Martha Randall and Therese Becker address concerns of African-American students. Randall, 213. Becker, 5, 6, 7, 15.

⁷¹ Outcome 312.2 and 312.6 for Level II CPE call for consideration multiple elements of cultural and ethnic differences, social conditions, systems, and justice issues as well as cultural humility; Outcome 315.6, 318.7, 318.8, 319.2 call for cultural self-awareness and cultural competency in the use of educational resources and curriculum design. Association for Clinical Pastoral Education: Standards Manual; accessed 5 Sep. 2006; available from <http://www.acpe.edu/standards.htm>.

to Mark that he prefers to offer a separate celebration, as this Jewish holiday and its particular significance gets diluted in a context where the majority culture is Christian. Mark realizes that his “well-meaning” attempt to be inclusive is misdirected in the context of Christian normativity.

Both examples illustrate that the emphasis of supposed ‘universals’ from the perspective of the majority faith tradition can actually deny the spirituality of those in a minority. On the surface it may appear as inclusive, but as power structures remain unconscious, it participates in structures of oppression.

Clinical Pastoral Education developed out of a Christian Protestant context. Although a slowly increasing number of CPE supervisors are from non-Christian traditions, the conceptual framework and language of the CPE curriculum is still largely shaped by Christian norms. The Jewish chaplains Bonita Taylor and David Zucker point out that Jewish supervisees often feel like “strangers in a strange land” and alienated from their non-Jewish CPE supervisors and peers.⁷² They offer some basic theological and cultural clues to help non-Jewish pastoral caregivers and clinical supervisors to understand and better support their Jewish patients and supervisees. With some critical differentiation from Taylor and Zucker, Sommer et al state the need for pastoral counselors to hear the particular language of the Jewish patient as well as a need for all professionals in the field to be more aware of Jewish values and traditions and to be cognizant of the spectrum of Jewish denominational attitudes and orientations.⁷³

⁷² Taylor and Zucker, 328.

⁷³ Sommer, Steinberg, and Breiger, 468.

The conclusion of these Jewish pastoral care givers can be translated into the context of other religious communities as well: Members of the dominant religious group in North Western countries, Christianity, may underestimate and be unaware of the normativeness of Christian symbols in their social context.⁷⁴ Thus, a socio-cultural analysis needs to include an examination of power dynamics within interreligious relationships.

Interreligious Prayer as a Prime Example of Interreligious Spiritual Care

As noted throughout this chapter, conceptions of intercultural pastoral care so far have not given much attention to pastoral care with persons of different faith traditions or persons who are not connected to any organized religion. However, it is part of the role of chaplains in public institutions to offer spiritual support and make rituals available that meet the needs of persons from diverse spiritual backgrounds and are inclusive. In times of disaster and crisis chaplains are called upon to offer interfaith services and prayers that are inclusive of and sensitive to the many religious traditions represented in their institutions. How can the pastoral relationship between persons of different religious traditions and their shared experience of spirituality be conceptualized? What roadblocks have to be identified that make interreligious prayer difficult – or impossible for some?

Scenarios of Communal and Personal Interreligious Prayer

Inclusive prayer or worship services are common in public institutions, such as hospitals and prisons. The observance of diverse religious holidays in public institutions

⁷⁴ Davis, 62.

can provide opportunities for shared prayer.⁷⁵ National disasters and crisis situations bring different religious communities on the local level together in interreligious services and actions. Common social issues, such as the AIDS crisis, concerns for peace and environmental justice have brought persons from different faiths together internationally as well as in local communities. Thus, chaplains as well as congregational leaders need to be clear about how they understand such services and the relationships with persons of other faiths. Several scenarios of interreligious prayer can be distinguished:⁷⁶ (1) *Multi-faith prayers* are often utilized during inter-religious gatherings and consultations. The religious traditions of participants are respected and maintained and prayers are offered in the presence of persons from other religious traditions. (2) *Interreligious prayer services* are designed with a shared representation of resources from different traditions. For example, an invocation from the Hindu tradition can be followed by a song from the Christian tradition and a reading from the Qur'ān. (3) *Generic Prayers* use a language and images that are not unique to any faith tradition and intended to be inclusive and available to all. (4) *Individual interreligious prayers* between a pastoral caregiver and careseeker from different religious traditions are shared as part of a counseling session or at the bedside in a hospital setting.

⁷⁵ An example of the observance of the Muslim Eid in an interreligious institution is presented by Beth Porter, "The Muslim Festival of Eid ul-Fitr at L'Arche Daybreak: A Pattern and Principles for Common Worship in Solidarity with Those Not of the Majority Faith," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 55, no. 2 (2001) : 198ff.

⁷⁶ These scenarios follow partly five types of interreligious prayer as distinguished by Thangaraj and Ariarajah. S. Wesley Ariarajah, *Not Without My Neighbor: Issues in Interfaith Relations* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1999), 32-34. I have complemented and modified the types described by Thanaraj and Ariarajah for the context of pastoral care.

The Reluctance to Engage in Interreligious Prayer

Churches at the official level as well as some individual clergy and chaplains hesitate to engage in these different types of interfaith prayers. As the language and symbols of particular religions are also expressions of their culture, persons from other traditions have difficulty understanding them and experience them as foreign. Sometimes they fear syncretism, compromise, and dilution of Christian faith.⁷⁷ As argued in Chapter 1, in the context of globalization many persons respond with anxiety to cultural and religious pluralism. Religious symbols and liturgy grant particular identity and provide community in the confusing plurality of beliefs. Particular religious rites can be secure sources of social identity. The separation of different communities in the religious realm, thus, consolidates ignorance about the other and stereotype. The ecumenical theologian Wesley Ariarajah points out that theologically, some Christians fear syncretism or see other religions as not based in God's self revelation. They often practice a "functional polytheism" assuming that the Hindu and the Muslim are praying to "other gods".⁷⁸ He concludes that the fear of religious communities, especially at the official level, to move closer in exchange with other traditions, is based on prejudice rather than theological reflection.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor, 30. Persons who converted to the Christian faith and have left the faith of the ancestors behind for the "true faith" (esp. in areas of Christian mission) may be reluctant to engage their old faith. Van Beek, 21, encourages pastoral caregivers in the counseling situation to be understanding of the counselee who has converted to Christianity. For those persons it may seem as if theological differences are glossed over when the caregiver shows openness to the religious system of the family or culture of origin.

⁷⁸ Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor, 28.

⁷⁹ Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor, 49.

An example of the struggle with religious pluralism and religious identity is represented in the response of two official church bodies in Germany to gatherings of Christians and Muslims during the first Gulf war to pray together for peace. In their response the Protestant Churches of Bavaria and Rhineland distinguished between interreligious prayer, prayers prepared together by members of the different faiths and prayed together, and multifaith prayer, where members of another faith are quietly and respectfully present during prayer of a religious community. The churches state that the formulation of interreligious prayer is theologically impossible as the images and understanding of God are very different.⁸⁰ Of the different forms of inter-religious prayer delineated above, the churches affirm only the first form, multifaith prayer. They claim that genuine interreligious prayer is theologically impossible because the understanding of God is too different between Muslims and Christians. Their distinction highlights the concern for the integrity of each religious tradition: The Christian understanding of God is Trinitarian, while Muslims understand Jesus not as divine but a highly respected human prophet.

The position of the churches seems to assume that doctrinal conformity is a precondition for shared communication with the Divine and shared prayer is based on uniform images and concepts of God. The strong emphasis on boundaries in this conceptualization of shared interreligious spiritual practice negates the fluidity of imagery of God. The emphasis on integrity excludes the possibility of shared expression of faith and spirituality. However, based on the diversity of prayer language and images of God in the Bible, especially in the Book of Psalms, for example, it can be argued that prayer is not a doctrinal description of the belief of a community but an opening to God's

⁸⁰ Goßman, 123f.

mystery from very different perspectives. In a pastoral care context of the hospital setting, the patients' preferences need to be respected. A patient or counselee may be hesitant to engage in a prayer with a chaplain or counselor from a different faith tradition. But if a patient finds support in shared prayer, does the idea of the theological impossibility of interreligious prayer hold up? In the following discussion the possibility of interreligious prayer in a pastoral care context is explored.

The Possibility of Interreligious Prayer in the Context of Spiritual Care – Three Concentric Circles

Interreligious prayer and interreligious spiritual care in general care can be conceptualized in three concentric circles.⁸¹ The outer circle is the realm of common human experience. As described above, people of different religious traditions share in the same global problems, such as poverty, ecological destruction, and violent conflict. Human beings share experiences such as birth and death, chronic illness and crisis. Such common experiences, even if they are interpreted differently in different traditions build a platform of interreligious interaction.

Another circle is characterized by interconnected spiritual practice. Jews and Christians, for example, both use the psalms as prayer books. They read them differently, yet there is some overlap. Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Roman Catholics use prayer beads. They are used differently in the different traditions, however, the similarity of the symbols indicate some interconnections.

⁸¹ Ariarajah conceptualizes interfaith worship in three circles. The inner circle represents the community's "private space," the second participation in the commonwealth of spirituality, the outer circle the meta-narrative of the human story. His model is used as a springboard for my reflections. I appropriate his model to the context of spiritual care, modify it and develop it further. See Ariarajah, Not Without My Neighbor, 49-53.

The circle of the particular spiritual practice is the core of the particular religious identity of a religious community. Interfaith spiritual care finds its boundaries and limits in this circle. Spiritual care in the field of particular spiritual practice most often includes the employment of particular spiritual resources, such as working closely with representatives of the religious communities involved.

The three circles are concentric, all are centered in one core. Thus, when I am offering spiritual support to a person from another religious tradition on their terms I am not moving away from my own spiritual center and tradition. Rather, shared human experiences represent areas where the spiritual center of the careseeker and my own can meet. We can also meet in areas where our spiritual traditions interconnect. We will experience difference, but our experiences and the ways we interpret them can interconnect like patches that can be sown together. As the following case examples demonstrate, interconnections between members of different religious traditions are possible in all three areas. However, the two outer circles represent areas where interconnections with other religious traditions are most easily possible.

The Circle of the Common Human Experience. The outer circle represents prayer in the context of a shared and *common global context*, in which different religious communities live more closely together and cooperation of religions is needed to address problems on a global scale. It also represents *common human experiences* like mortality and coping with illness.

Gábor Hézer, a protestant chaplain in a Psychiatric institution in Germany, describes an experience leading a worship service in the hospital meditation room where one morning he finds the majority of the visitors to be Muslims from different countries

of origin. He decides to abandon the usual Protestant liturgy. Instead, he shares reflections and invites the visitors to join in the conversation. He states that now in the hospital suddenly something is possible that human beings seem to be unable to create otherwise: people from different religious traditions are together with their God. They find that to be as natural as sharing the meal together on the unit. They find that their faith can be a powerful ally in their struggle with their illness. They close with blessings from their traditions all of which find a spontaneous “Amen” as response. For Hézer, this worship is an experience “coram deo”.⁸² The chaplain in this vignette moves beyond the particular spiritual practice of the setting because the common humanity of the participants and their common struggle with their mental illness, which calls for a common spiritual practice.

Barbara, a Jewish CPE student, completes her CPE in a hospital with a primarily Christian population. She supports a Roman Catholic family in the Intensive Care Unit whose child is being disconnected from life support after a long illness and dies. Before she offers a prayer Barbara invites the family members to say words of prayer and blessing, thus making room for the religious identity of the family. Barbara moves into unfamiliar ground, as spontaneous prayer is not as common within the Jewish tradition as within the Christian tradition. The prayer she offers is informed by images and metaphors of her own tradition. In her reflection with her peers she expresses how connected she felt to the persons in the room because “there was just something so human about the experience. The pain, the grief, the comfort, the mystery of death ... the prayers flowed out of me when I could connect to the most humanizing aspects of the experience.” As

⁸² Gábor Hézer, “Psychiatrie: Interkulturelle Szenen auf der Suche nach Menschenwürde”(Psychiatry: Intercultural Scenarios of the Search for Human Dignity), in Federsmidt et al, 130-31.

she discusses her experiences, the group discovers that the limitations presented with different faiths are also opportunities. The Jewish chaplain invites patients who often are being “prayed for” by a priest, to say their own prayer, thus empowering them to express their struggles and needs on their own terms.

The circle of a Common Human Experience can consist of particular rituals, readings and practices, but they are focused on the shared and common experience of humanity and suffering.

The Circle of Interconnected Spiritual Practice. In Kyoto, Japan, in 1987 persons who have immersed themselves in spiritual traditions other than their own meet for a consultation with the theme of “Spirituality in Interfaith Dialogue”. The participants have participated in meditation practices, prayer, and festivals of other traditions.⁸³ Some express that the “adoption” of spiritual practices can only be authentic when they come from the center and are practiced within the whole of the particular tradition.⁸⁴ Their shared statement affirms that their dialogue at the level of spirituality helps to see others as fellow seekers and as partners in working for peace and justice and that the spiritual life of other faiths can deepen their own Christian faith.⁸⁵ The possibility of shared spiritual practice is possible because religious history is a web of relationships. Throughout history religions have been interconnected and influenced each other.⁸⁶

As a chaplain I visited once with a retired Jewish rabbi who was hospitalized. As our conversation came to an end, I offered an informal blessing for his recovery. In

⁸³ Tosh Arai, and Wesley Ariarajah, eds. , Spirituality in Interfaith Dialogue (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1989), ix.

⁸⁴ Bettina Bäumer, “A Journey With the Unknown,” in Arai and Ariarajah, 37ff.

⁸⁵ Arai and Ariarajah, “Statement”, in Arai and Ariarajah, 2.

⁸⁶ See the section on a global theological colloquy in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

response the rabbi offered to bless me. He placed a paper napkin from his nightstand on my head – perhaps to function as a kippah, an expression of humility before the Divine. If he was orthodox, perhaps the napkin made it possible for him to touch me. After he placed the napkin on my head he laid his hand on me and blessed me. I was deeply touched and honored to receive his blessing. That the rabbi did not share my belief in the triune God, never crossed my mind. The connection to this rabbi as well as his gift was an authentic religious experience and a sacred moment for me. His laying on of hands as well as the use of the paper napkin left a deep impression with me. The rabbi created a sacred space in the hospital room and ritualized the blessing with his gestures, which enriched and deepened my understanding of blessing and has encouraged me to use more expressive gestures in my spiritual practice, personally as well as in my spiritual care.

Sarah, a Jewish CPE intern has established a close relationship with a mother whose infant is in the Intensive Care Unit. When the child dies, the mother asks for a baptism. The intern asks a Christian clergy of the Spiritual Care Team to conduct the baptism, as both, Sarah and the mother, who is Lutheran, feel that a chaplain of the Christian faith can offer the ritual with a stronger personal participation. The Trinitarian formula as the centerpiece of the baptismal liturgy is a core confession of the Christian faith. However, Sarah participates in the baptismal liturgy through a reading of Psalm 23 and by offering the priestly blessing, which provides words that are familiar and of comfort to the Lutheran mother in crisis. Sarah can offer the priestly blessing from the fullness of her tradition. The blessing as well as the psalm may generate different images and associations for Sarah and the mother. The Lutheran mother may understand Psalm 23 through a christological lens, generating the metaphor of Christ as the good shepherd.

Sarah and the mother connect to this element of the liturgy differently coming to it from their own contexts. At the same time, this different yet shared tradition makes an interconnection possible.

Both vignettes demonstrate that when pastoral care giver and patient have an opportunity to acknowledge their differences and express their beliefs and spiritual practices, the pastoral encounter encourages mutuality. I offered spiritual support as well as received spiritual care from the hospitalized rabbi. A baptismal liturgy could be created that made room for honoring the spiritual care relationship of the Jewish chaplain and the Christian mother.

The Circle of Particular Spiritual Practice. This inner circle represents the core of beliefs and liturgical life where the community celebrates its story, for example, the celebration of Communion within the Christian tradition. It is the community's private space into which others can be invited.

Baptism is a spiritual practice at the core of Christian identity. In the hospital setting, chaplains from traditions emphasizing believer's baptism at times set aside their personal beliefs about baptism to offer support to families and their spiritual needs. Although baptism is a ritual of initiation into the Christian Church, chaplains may baptize infants who have died because parents express a need for this ritual that offers them reassurance and comfort. Jewish chaplain Phyllis Brooks Toback expresses an additional concern a Jewish chaplain may experience with regard to baptism: "As a Jew I carry with me the history of centuries of persecution and attempts by Christians to get Jews to acknowledge the divinity of Jesus and to verbalize acceptance of Christianity."⁸⁷ She

⁸⁷ Toback, 315.

continues to describe emergency situations when a Christian chaplain is not available and she may work together with Christian staff or when she as a Jewish chaplain can respond to the pastoral need for baptism and blessing by *declaring on behalf* of the parents that they desire to have their child baptized in the name of the triune God. Toback's reflections are very personal, and different chaplains may practice different boundaries when it comes to the participation in the particular spiritual practices of another tradition. At times, in situations of suffering and crisis, pastoral care givers may move into the terrain of a particular tradition, motivated by their care for the other persons as well as their faith in the presence of God in these moments.⁸⁸

Another example of a distinction of the two concentric circles of shared and particular spiritual practice is the differentiation of ritual and personal prayer. The "Our Father" or citations from the Qu'ran on the one hand represent ritual prayers, while both, the Christian and the Muslim tradition, know of individual prayers on the other hand. Islam has a rich tradition of du'a, prayers formulated for special concerns. An intercessory prayer understood and offered by a chaplain as a du'a may be an expression of spiritual support for a Muslim patient and can represent a shared spiritual practice in the context of pastoral care. However, the patient may be better helped through a person who shares their faith and can recite the Qu'ran, and share a deeper spiritual connection.

It is important for the spiritual caregiver to respect the boundaries of the inner circle of particular spiritual practice. In this circle it may be most helpful to acknowledge differences and seek other more appropriate resources than trying to be everything for everyone. An interfaith chaplain's spiritual support can go a long way, but at times her or

⁸⁸ Toback, 317.

his role may be that of a *resource agent*, who connects patients with appropriate faith specific resources, such as an imam or a rabbi.

Because of the circle of particular spiritual practice, interfaith spiritual care includes the nurturing and building of coalitions with diverse religious resources within the local community. Not everything can be accomplished by one spiritual care giver, but effective spiritual support requires a patchwork of religious resources which can be utilized when needed. At times, interfaith chaplains function as “spiritual social workers”.⁸⁹

Summary and Conclusion: Mapping Interreligious Spiritual Care

There seems to be a discrepancy between the frequency of pastoral praxis in which pastoral care givers, institutional chaplains, and congregational pastors increasingly encounter persons of other faiths, and the extent of pastoral theological reflection on this interreligious praxis as reflected in the literature of pastoral care and counseling.⁹⁰ Theological reflection has to catch up to a religiously plural social context. German professor of Practical Theology Uta Pohl-Patalong, advocates a shift from a self understanding of practical theology primarily in relation to the praxis of the church to a concern with the reality of a religiously plural society. According to this paradigm shift practical theology reflects social reality with its religious plurality from a Christian perspective, yet very conscious of the traditions and interests that guide and shape this

⁸⁹ This formulation was inspired by William Clements, Claremont School of Theology.

⁹⁰ For the German context Christoph Bochinger notes that in theological and religious studies other religions have a marginal place, whereas the concrete praxis in an increasingly multicultural context presses of an engagement with other religions. He states a shift from engaging other religions in a comparative perspective to encounter. Bochinger, 86f.

perception. It does not claim the Christian perspectives as ‘true’, but seeks deepening, correction and relativization of its own perspective. It sees its own Christian perspective as one with a relative right, which is open to learn about the frameworks of persons from other traditions.⁹¹ With such an open perspective, practical theology can also contribute to the peaceful and just coexistence of persons from different cultures in one society. In this contact, cooperation with members of other faith communities is possible as well as dissent and questioning of issues of disagreement.⁹²

As I have explained in the theological foundation of a practical theology of interreligious encounters, Chapter 3, the pro-active engagement of the religiously other and interreligious cooperation is not only rooted in a religiously pluralistic social context, but also motivated in Christian teaching itself and very much understood as a task and a praxis of the church. Seeking to understand the core of the Christian faith as a concrete expression of the truth does not exclude approaching concrete expressions of truth in other traditions with openness and engagement. Rather, reaching deep into the center of Christian teachings Christians are motivated to reach out, listen to, learn from and speak to their religious neighbors. Interreligious dialogue becomes a spiritual practice. The universal and the particular dimension of religious traditions are held in a creative tension. In order to tend to suffering on the personal, local, and global level, persons from different religious traditions, while not negating their differences, work together to apply patches to wounds in the lives of persons and communities.

⁹¹ Pohl-Patalong, 107.

⁹² Pohl-Patalong, 108

Interreligious spiritual care, like intercultural pastoral care is based on three principles. (1) We are like all others: Persons share a common humanity. (2) We are like some others: there are culturally specific ways of knowing, interpreting, and valuing the world, customs, rituals and forms of social relationships. (3) We are like no other: persons are individuals with a particular make-up that is unique. This includes an awareness of the counselor's own assumptions and biases.⁹³

Spiritual caregiver and recipients can meet on one of the three concentric circles of common human experience, interconnected spiritual practice, and particular spiritual practice. Where they meet, depends on the spiritual care situation and its needs. Human experiences of suffering, struggles with illness, and the mystery of death are common contexts and represent wounds to which patches are applied intended to help the healing process. The patches may be incongruous to some degree. Shared spiritual practice does not mean sameness but connection, which leaves room for difference and mutuality. Differences and power imbalances are acknowledged, particular religious identities are respected and commonalities are honored. The participants come from within their own contexts, yet in the process of empathic support, negotiate differences and open themselves up to experience and be part of another person's struggle to cope spiritually with a crisis. As spiritual caregivers keep power differences in check, they encourage the religious expressions of careseekers and do not dilute differences. In the social context of Christian normativity, careseekers of minority faiths may need to have more room to express their particular spirituality, and Christian caregivers have a responsibility to reach out and develop a knowledge of other traditions as well as interreligious resources.

⁹³ Lartey, *In Living Color*, 171-75; Augsburg, *Pastoral Counseling*, 49-67; Hauschildt, 244.

Spiritual caregivers need to recognize their limitations and facilitate connections with the religious communities of careseekers to help them meet their particular religious needs. Interreligious spiritual care involves the active development and nurture of cooperative relationships with diverse religious communities. Interreligious spiritual care, therefore, includes the roles of “resource agent” and “spiritual social worker.”

For the purpose of this study a working definition of interreligious spiritual care informed by reflections delineated in this chapter is proposed: *Spiritual care consists of supportive verbal, non-verbal and symbolic interactions, which aim at accompanying persons and communities in times of crisis, change, suffering, and joy. Spiritual care seeks to empower persons to discover and utilize their spiritual resources and to facilitate persons' and communities' coping with and transforming of suffering. It understands persons in relation to their environments and is based on attention to social context, commonalities as well as differences in power, cultural and spiritual frameworks of the participants. It involves the development and use of an interreligious network of resources and communities.*

CHAPTER 5

Applying Patches to the Wounds in Interreligious Relationships – Reducing Prejudice through Intergroup Contact

Introduction

A CPE group in a multi-cultural urban U.S. teaching hospital experiences conflict on numerous levels throughout the training course. The group consists of eight members and a supervisor with equal representation of gender; one student is gay. The supervisor and four group members are Caucasian, the other four have been born and raised in Brazil, Nigeria, Vietnam, and Iran. One group member is Muslim while the others represent different denominations within the Christian faith tradition. Conflict around cultural issues transpires: The CPE learning model values self-discernment and self-disclosure when discussing clinical cases and use of self in pastoral care. The non-Western cultures that are represented in the peer group are not as concerned with the individual “self” and do not encourage disclosure of private information to persons outside of the immediate context of family and friendship. The students from Africa, Vietnam, and Iran thus struggle with this group norm and are experienced by some Caucasian members as disengaging from the group.

Conflicts around religious issues pop up more often. The CPE training course is conducted for six months, starting three months after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in September of 2001. The Muslim student feels very vulnerable, given the social climate of heightened stereotype towards Muslims. She needs private space for her prayers several times during the day, which she cannot find in the hospital chapel or any

other space in the hospital. She retreats to her car in order to pray and thus does not join peers for informal lunch breaks. A Roman Catholic member is upset when the supervisor critiques her use of the Trinity in a prayer during common worship because the Christian prayer excludes the Muslim intern. The gay student confronts the Muslim student several times during the course about the “judgmental attitude” toward homosexuality in Islam. The majority of students report at the end of the CPE course that they have been enriched by the diversity and have developed a more differentiated view of the faith traditions of others. Two students keep an emotional distance to the Muslim intern through the end and label her during a conversation with the supervisor as a “fundamentalist”. The conflicts of the group are influenced by personality factors, the post 9/11 social context, group dynamics and the minority position which is felt at different times by the Muslim, and the gay group member, as well as those from different cultural contexts.

Chapter 3 addresses a theological foundation for a practical theology of interreligious encounters and closes with the quest for a methodology. Chapter 4 envisions pathways to interreligious encounters in spiritual care and counseling. This chapter further develops the quest for a method of a global didactic. It provides a lens to better understand religious conflicts of this and other diverse interreligious groups. The chapter begins with a definition of the terminology used and a review of the relevant literature from the field of Intergroup Contact Theory. Its concepts are introduced and applied to the context of clinical work with interreligious groups. Relevant concepts are illustrated with clinical examples from the context of CPE to demonstrate the usefulness of these theories from the field of Social Psychology for contexts of spiritual care, congregational care and theological education. I will demonstrate that Intergroup Contact

Theory provides useful tools for chaplains, counselors, and congregational leaders to facilitate constructive relationships between persons of diverse religious groups. I will present strategies for stereotype reduction in intergroup encounters in such settings.

Definitions

In their review of Intergroup Relations Theory, Donald Taylor and Fathali Moghaddam describe the use of the term Intergroup Relations as including conflictual as well as non-conflictual ways of interaction and behavior as well as attitudes and emotions.¹ The term ‘group’ does not only refer to the cohesive group in the narrow sense, but also to membership of a category. Intergroup relations describe any aspect of the human interaction that involves individuals perceiving themselves as members of a social category, or being perceived by others as belonging to a social category.² The interest in looking at intergroup relations is psychological in that the focus is on the meaning attached to a behavior and not just the concrete observable features.

As stereotype and prejudice are major ingredients of intergroup contact, the terms shall be introduced here following the definitions of John Dovidio et al. Prejudice is an unfair negative attitude toward a social group or a person perceived to be a member of that group. Like other attitudes, prejudice is conceived of having cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Stereotypes have often been identified as the belief component of

¹ Donald M. Taylor and Fathali M. Moghaddam, Theories of Intergroup Relations: International Social Psychological Perspectives, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994), 6.

² Taylor and Moghaddam, 6.

prejudice. A stereotype is a set of characteristics associated with a cognitive category, which perceivers use to process information about the group members or the group.³

While personal identity consists of those aspects of the self that are based on individual characteristics, social identity is understood as that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups).⁴ Social identity theory has been formalized by Henri Tajfel and John Turner whose definitions are utilized here. Through social categorization we segment and order the social environment, which enables us to undertake social actions. Social categorization does not only structure the social world, it also defines the place of the individual in the society by providing an identification of the self in social terms. The very act of categorization causes the tendency to evaluate oneself and one's group positively. Persons are motivated to achieve a positive social identity and to belong to a positively evaluated group. In other words, social categorization leads to in-group favoritism, which maintains self-esteem.⁵

Social comparison is the means through which individuals obtain an assessment of their group's social status. If they achieve an adequate social identity through their group membership, they tend to attempt to maintain it through comparative superiority.⁶ This competitive process creates a depersonalized view of outgroup members and leads to

³ John F. Dovidio, Kerry Kawakami, and Samuel L. Gaertner, "Reducing Contemporary Prejudice: Combating Explicit and Implicit Bias at the Individual and Intergroup Level," in Reducing Prejudice and Discrimination, ed. Stuart Oskamp (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), 137-38.

⁴ Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior," in Psychology of Intergroup Relations, ed. Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986), 15-16.

⁵ Tajfel and Turner, 16

⁶ Tajfel and Turner, 16.

homogeneous and undifferentiated perceptions of them.⁷ Studies have shown, for example, that individuals more readily offer prosocial behavior to ingroup than outgroup members and that they remember more detailed and more positive information about ingroup than outgroup members.⁸ These biases perpetuate social stereotypes even in the face of disconfirming evidence. The degree to which social comparison colors the relationship between groups depends on the social context, for example, difference in social status, majority or minority positions of the groups involved.

Review of Relevant Literature and Location of Intergroup Contact Theory in the Field of Intergroup Relations

Intergroup conflict can have causes in individual, functional, and social conditions. A brief overview of a few influential schools of thought explains the context of Intergroup Contact Theory, which primarily is concerned with the development of practical strategies to combat stereotype and prejudice in intergroup encounters.⁹

Psychoanalysis understands intergroup conflict as rooted in an emotional dynamic in the individual.¹⁰ Under the influence of Freud and the experience of World War II

⁷ Marilynn B. Brewer and Norman Miller, "Beyond the Contact Hypothesis: Theoretical Perspectives on Desegregation," in Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation, ed. Marilynn B. Brewer and Norman Miller (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984), 281ff.

⁸ Samuel L. Gaertner, John F. Dovidio, Jason A. Nier, Christine M. Ward, and Brenda S. Banker, "Across Cultural Divides: The Value of a Superordinate Identity," in Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict, ed. Deborah A. Prentice and Dale T. Miller (New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 1999), 177.

⁹ The Intergroup Contact Theory is discussed in detail below. See section "Intergroup Theory".

¹⁰ Subconscious forces become manifest in groups, and libidinal ties are expressed in love and identification with in-group members and/or the powerful group leader and involve hostility, displaced aggression toward the outgroup. The stronger the in-group libidinal ties, the stronger will be the out-group hostility toward a scapegoat, a group dissimilar to the individuals' in-group. Taylor and Moghaddam, 19-

Adorno et al studied the potentially fascistic personality. Their classic study The Authoritarian Personality analyzes scapegoating of outgroups such as the Jews in Nazi Germany and African Americans in the U.S. The authoritarian personality is described as repressing certain feelings or aspects in the self, such as fear, weakness, and sex impulses projecting those onto others so that they are not experienced as threatening in the self.¹¹

Moving beyond the focus on the individual, Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RCT) claims that *real conflict* of group interests causes intergroup conflict. Many intergroup conflicts have their basis in competition for power or scarce resources, such as land, natural resources, money, or in differences in values and norms.¹² Also, competition for basic psychological needs, such as security, identity, recognition, and participation, can be underlying intergroup conflict.¹³ RCT shares with Intergroup Contact Theory the analysis of cooperation and the operationalization of superordinate goals.

An additional school of thought is represented in Social Identity Theory, which studies perceptual processes to explain intergroup behavior and postulates that a change in perceptions will be followed by emotional and behavioral change. The three concepts

20. John Dollard et al., Frustration and Aggression, (New Haven: Yale University Press, Published for Institute of Human Relations, 1939).

¹¹ Theodor W. Adorno et al., The Authoritarian Personality. Studies in Prejudice, The Norton Library, N 492 (New York: Norton, 1969).

¹² Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan, Intergroup Relations, Social Psychology Series (Dubuque: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1996), 144.

¹³ Stephan and Stephan, Intergroup Relations, 150; Muzafer Sherif and Morton Deutsch moved forward the research in the field of RCT, investigating power structures, norms and values of groups and exploring the role of cooperation in the reduction of intergroup tensions. For example, Muzafer Sherif and Carolyn W. Sherif, Groups in Harmony and Tension: An Integration of Studies on Intergroup Relations (New York: Harper, 1953); Morton Deutsch, "A Theory of Cooperation and Competition," Human Relations vol. 2 (1949) : 129-52.

of social identity, social categorization, and social comparison are important when attempting to understand intergroup conflict.¹⁴ Intergroup Contact Theory has in common with Social Identity Theory the impetus for social change and the concern of reducing out-group stereotypes. Unlike Social Identity Theory it is less concerned with the causes of intergroup conflict but with practical issues of improving intergroup relations.¹⁵

Intergroup Contact Theory has become an important theoretical focus of Intergroup Relations because it significantly influenced U.S. policies on desegregation in schools and the movement of multiculturalism.¹⁶ Gordon Allport's formulation in 1954 has become the most influential.¹⁷ Since then it has been expanded and reformulated. Thomas Pettigrew has reviewed the development of Allport's Intergroup Contact Theory and concludes that studies generally support the importance of Intergroup Contact Theory.¹⁸ Because Intergroup Contact Theory focuses on face-to-face contact between members of different groups and is primarily concerned with the practical issues of improving

¹⁴ See the section on definitions in this chapter as well as Tajfel and Turner.

¹⁵ Stephan and Stephan, Intergroup Relations, 63.

¹⁶ Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," Annual Review of Psychology vol. 49, (1998) : 66.

¹⁷ Gordon W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954); Stuart Cook added to Allport's conditions cooperative interdependence, opportunity to disconfirm stereotypes, intimacy, and social norms of equality; Stuart Cook, "Cooperative Interaction in Multiethnic Contexts," in Groups in Contact: The Psychology of Desegregation, ed. Norman Miller and Marilyn B. Brewer (Orlando: Academic Press, 1984), 183.

¹⁸ Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp conducted a meta-analysis of intergroup contact effects to evaluate this vast research assembled over 50 years, which includes field studies, laboratory experiments, surveys, and archival research. Thomas F. Pettigrew and Linda R. Tropp, "Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis: Its History and Influence," in On the Nature of Prejudice: Fifty Years after Allport, ed. John F. Dovidio, Peter Glick and Laurie A. Rudman, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 264, 266. See also Pettigrew "Intergroup Contact Theory," 65-84; and "The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered," in Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters, ed. Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, 169-95. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986).

intergroup relations, this inquiry zeros in on Allport's theory with Pettigrew's extension.¹⁹

The research related to Intergroup Contact Theory demonstrates that under certain conditions contact between groups reduces stereotypes. However, it does not explain the process by which stereotype reduction occurs. Therefore it has been complemented with concepts from Social Identity Theory. Marilynn Brewer and Norman Miller developed the model of decategorization, according to which the process of social categorization is interrupted through the processing of personalized information about outgroup members.²⁰ They also articulated the notion of cross-categorization, describing the process of criss-crossing category memberships which de-emphasizes differences between groups.²¹ John Dovidio and Samuel Gaertner complemented these two concepts with the recategorization or common ingroup identity model which corresponds to Allport's introduction of superordinate goals into the contact situation: Members of two different groups are induced to see themselves as members of a single superordinate

¹⁹ See the section on intergroup theory in this chapter. Pettigrew added to Allport's facilitating conditions "friendship potential". Pettigrew points out that Intergroup Contact Theory is only one among other processes for stereotype reduction and does not address institutional discrimination or prejudice in the context of societal structures. Pettigrew, "The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered," 172-73, 179. See also Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown, "Contact is not Enough: An Intergroup Perspective on the 'Contact Hypothesis'," in Hewstone and Brown Contact and Conflict, 21.

²⁰ See the section on definitions in this chapter regarding social identity, social categorization, and social comparison. See Brewer and Miller, "Beyond", 283, 288-89; Norman Miller and Marilynn B. Brewer, "Categorization Effects on Ingroup and Outgroup Perception," in Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism, ed. John F. Dovidio and Samuel Gaertner (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986), 213.

²¹ Marilynn B. Brewer, "Reducing Prejudice Through Cross-Categorization: Effects of Multiple Social Identities," in Oskamp, Reducing Prejudice, 170; Norman Miller, Lynn M. Orban, and Eric J. Vanman, "A Theoretical Analysis of Crossed Social Categorization Effects," in Intergroup Cognition and Intergroup Behavior, ed. Constantine Sedikides, John Schopler, and Chester A. Insko (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998), 413.

group and consequently see former outgroup members in a more positive light.²² The three models have in common that they emphasize similarity and commonalities of members of different groups. Therefore, they have been critiqued and counterbalanced by the model of mutual differentiation put forth by Miles Hewstone and Rupert Brown. Mutual differentiation keeps differences between groups salient in the context of intergroup cooperation.²³

Decategorization and recategorization are often associated with philosophies of assimilationist concepts of improving intergroup relations, while the model of mutual differentiation is associated with a pluralistic philosophy of intergroup relations.²⁴ The emphasis on either similarity or difference is guided by the underlying vision of the society in a multicultural mode with models such as the common group or “melting pot” on the one hand, or images such as “mosaic,” “patchwork quilt,” “unity through diversity” on the other hand.²⁵ The tension between the particular and the universal, an issue in globalization theory as well as the theology of religious pluralism, emerges as a theme in Intergroup Contact Theory as well. Approaches have developed that seek to

²² Dovidio, Kawakami, and Gaertner, 137-63; Samuel L. Gaertner, and John F. Dovidio, eds. Reducing Intergroup Bias: The Common Group Identity Model. Essays in Social Psychology, (Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 2000); Samuel L. Gaertner, John F. Dovidio, Jeffrey Mann, and Marina Pomare, “How does Cooperation Reduce Intergroup Bias?” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology v. 59, no. 4 (1990) : 692-704; Samuel L. Gaertner et al., “Across Cultural Divides,” 173-212.

²³ Hewstone and Brown, “Contact”, 29-30; Miles Hewstone and Charles G. Lord, “Changing Intergroup Cognitions and Intergroup Behavior: The Role of Typicality,” in Sedikides, Schopler, and Insko, 367-92.

²⁴ Dana Bramel sees the assumption of similarity as one of the theoretical underpinnings of the intergroup contact hypothesis. See Dana Bramel, “The Strange Career of the Contact Hypothesis,” in The Psychology of Ethnic and Cultural Conflict, ed. Lee, Yueh-Ting, et al. Psychological Dimensions of War and Peace (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 64.

²⁵ Clark McCauley et al. “Contact and Identity in Intergroup Relations,” in Lee et al, 325. See also Taylor and Moghaddam, 189.

hold both, the universal and the particular pole: Recent studies support a combined approach with decategorization at the beginning, mutual differentiation in a following stages, and recategorization introduced in a third stage.²⁶

The reduction of stereotype in intergroup contact situations is not only influenced by categorization processes, but also by emotional processes. Pettigrew points out that in further research intergroup contact theory needs to include attention to affect and its role in prejudice, such as anxiety and threat, which subvert the reduction of prejudice in intergroup encounters.²⁷ I will employ the study of intergroup anxiety by Walter and Cookie Stephan and David Wilder's analysis of the role of anxiety in stereotypic judgments as well as the role of empathy as a positive factor in intergroup contact as explored by Adam Galinsky and Gordon Moskowitz.²⁸

All concepts mentioned in this overview of the relevant literature will be discussed in more detail throughout this chapter. They have been developed in numerous field and laboratory experiments for over fifty years. Since it is my goal to outline practical tools for the facilitation of interreligious encounters, I will not describe the experiments. The referenced literature contains detailed description of studies and experiments as well as their evaluation.

²⁶ Jared B. Kenworthy, Rhiannon N. Turner, Miles Hewstone, and Alberto Voci, "Intergroup Contact: When does it Work, and Why?" in Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman, 278-292, especially 284.

²⁷ Pettigrew and Tropp, 272; Pettigrew, "The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered," 181.

²⁸ Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice," in Oskamp, Reducing Prejudice, 37-38; David A. Wilder, "The Role of Anxiety in Facilitating Stereotypic Judgments of Outgroup Behavior," in Affect, Cognition, and Stereotyping: Interactive Processes in Group Perception, ed. Diane M. Mackie and David L. Hamilton, 87-109 (San Diego: Academic Press, 1993); Adam D. Galinsky and Gordon B. Moskowitz, "Perspective-Taking: Decreasing Stereotype Expression, Stereotype Accessibility, and In-Group Favoritism," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 78, no. 4 (2000) :708-24, especially 708, 720.

Intergroup Contact Theory

Conditions for Intergroup Contact

Summarized, Allport's Intergroup Contact Hypothesis is as follows:

Prejudice (unless deeply rooted in the character structure of the individual) may be reduced by equal status contact between majority and minority groups in the pursuit of common goals. The effect is greatly enhanced if this contact is sanctioned by institutional supports, (i.e. by law, custom or local atmosphere), and if it is of a sort that leads to the perception of common interests and common humanity between members of two groups.²⁹

Thus, he specifies four key conditions for positive effects of intergroup contact: equal status, common goals, cooperation, and authority support. Recent empirical studies from various contexts suggest that intergroup contact has positive effects even when the situation does not enhance all of Allport's conditions. While Allport's factors are important, studies overall indicate that they are not necessary to achieve positive effects.³⁰ Thus, Allport's key conditions are better thought of as *facilitating rather than essential conditions* for prejudice reduction through intergroup contact.³¹

Equal Status. Equal status is difficult to define. Status differences that members bring into the contact situation cannot be overcome. However, studies have established that even if members have different status in society, equal status within the intergroup contact situation enhances successful intergroup contact. It is important that both groups perceive equal status *within* the contact situation.³² Egalitarian norms can provide a

²⁹ Allport, 267.

³⁰ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 68.

³¹ Pettigrew and Tropp, 271.

³² Pettigrew and Tropp, 264.

source of positive self-identity that is alternative to social category identity.³³ However, when a higher status group is threatened by social advances of a previously lower-status group, intergroup equality may „backfire“ and be experienced as a threat causing negative attitudinal change.³⁴ It may be necessary for a leader to redress status differences, but she or he may be perceived as unfair.³⁵

Returning to the introductory vignette, for example, the non-Western peers are disadvantaged as they find themselves within a Western learning culture in CPE that encourages self-disclosure of very personal information early on in the CPE course. Their reluctance to self-disclose, which is appropriate within *their* cultural context, is interpreted by some of the Caucasian peers as disengagement from the group. The supervisor raises the issue of different communication styles in order to teach about cultural difference as well as to boost equality and level the playing field. These interventions, however, are criticized by some Caucasian peers as “overcompensating” and taking sides for those from a different culture.

Equal status does not exist when there is a power hierarchy between group members who give and receive help; offering help or charity may not necessarily reduce conflict because it establishes inequality between those who give and those who receive help.³⁶ For example, chaplains offering spiritual care to patients or families of different

³³ Brewer and Miller, “Beyond,” 295.

³⁴ Hewstone and Brown, “Contact,” 15; Gaertner and Dovidio, Reducing Intergroup Bias, 101.

³⁵ Stephen Worchel, “The Role of Cooperation in Reducing Intergroup Conflict,” in Psychology of Intergroup Relations, ed. Stephen Worchel and William G. Austin (Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1986), 290.

³⁶ Worchel, “The Role of Cooperation,” 292. See the section on socio-cultural analysis in the Chapter 4 of this dissertation.

faiths, do not find themselves on an equal level with them. The supervision of such encounters needs to give careful attention to power dynamics within the relationship.

Common Goals. Athletic teams represent prime examples for prejudice reduction through active goal-oriented efforts.³⁷ Not a single superordinate goal but a series of cumulative goals is required in order to reduce intergroup conflict.³⁸ The idea of superordinate goals has been further developed in the concept of a superordinate group identity, the common ingroup identity model, which will be discussed in more detail below.³⁹

Intergroup Cooperation. The significance of cooperation in positive intergroup contact has been established through the Robbers Cave Study conducted at a boys summer camp by Mustafaer Sherif and his colleagues, which has become a classic in the field of Intergroup Relations.⁴⁰

Some strategies underscore positive effects of intergroup cooperation: a consistent number of cooperative contacts, increased communication that allows for disseminating positive information about the outgroup, and successful outcomes of mutual cooperation.⁴¹

³⁷ Pettigrew and Tropp, 265.

³⁸ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 23.

³⁹ Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio, "Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism: Problems, Progress and Promise," in Prejudice, Discrimination, and Racism, ed. John F. Dovidio and Samuel Gaertner, (Orlando: Academic Press, 1986), 323.

⁴⁰ Taylor and Moghaddam, 38-39.

⁴¹ Worchel, "The Role of Cooperation," 295; 304; 298. According to the results of the experiment, three stages of intergroup development can be concluded. In a first phase of *group formation* a group culture develops through functional tasks, which requires inter-*individual* cooperation. A second phase of *intergroup conflict* develops through intergroup competition for scarce resources and results in aggressive leadership and negative attitudes toward the out-group. A third stage of *intergroup cooperation* is achieved

Cooperation is not a simple recipe for reduction of intergroup conflict, but it can be successful in concert with other strategies. Careful attention needs to be given to the conditions surrounding the cooperative encounter.⁴² For example, when co-operation between previously competitive groups ends in failure, the result may be outgroup derogation in the form of scapegoating.⁴³ The personality factors of those involved may influence the effect of cooperation, as competitive behavior of individual group members may disrupt the cooperative group dynamic.⁴⁴

Institutional Support. With explicit social sanction, intergroup contact is more readily accepted. The passage of civil-rights legislation has been instrumental in establishing antiprejudicial norms in American society.⁴⁵ Studies have supported that intergroup contact of group leaders alone is not an effective method to improve intergroup relations. Addressing intergroup conflict rather needs to engage members at the grassroots level. However, when intergroup contact on the basic level is supported by the group leaders and institutions, it increases its effectiveness.⁴⁶

Friendship potential. Because of a dramatic shift in intergroup research suggesting that constructive contact relates more closely to long-term close relationships than to initial acquaintanceship, Thomas Pettigrew adds to Allport's four key conditions a fifth: „The contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become

by introducing superordinate goals, which foster harmonious intergroup attitudes. See Taylor and Moghaddam, 39.

⁴² Worchel, "The Role of Cooperation," 297.

⁴³ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 25.

⁴⁴ Worchel, "The Role of Cooperation," 295.

⁴⁵ Pettigrew and Tropp, 266.

⁴⁶ Worchel, "The Role of Cooperation," 290.

friends.”⁴⁷ This implies close interactions that make self-disclosure possible as well as other friendship developing mechanisms. Interpersonal orientation of intergroup encounters include extended contact over time and across contexts, informality, open communication, and the absence of a single group goal or formal group structure.⁴⁸ Extended intergroup contact often has more positive results than the contact hypothesis predicts.

The Relevance of Intergroup Contact Theory for Congregational Care and Clinical Pastoral Education

Intergroup Contact Theory has had a strong influence on shaping policies of multicultural education. In the following I will demonstrate that it can be applied to interreligious encounters in the context of spiritual and congregational care and its supervision and training.⁴⁹ Intergroup contact occurs between spiritual care givers and patients, families, and counselees of different faith traditions. The Contact Hypothesis is carried out primarily in group settings with an educational component and applies less to the encounter of individuals. However, some strategies for the facilitation of intergroup contact can be applied to spiritual care and its supervision as they can be observed and reflected upon in self-reports, co-visits, verbatims and case conferences.⁵⁰

In the context of CPE, intergroup contact can include interactions of peer group members of different religious or cultural groups. In the context of congregational care intergroup contact occurs when a local congregation lives in close proximity with a

⁴⁷ Pettigrew, Intergroup Contact Theory, 76.

⁴⁸ Brewer and Miller, “Beyond,” 294.

⁴⁹ For an overview see Appendix H of this dissertation.

⁵⁰ Especially the strategies of decategorization and cross-categorization can be applied to encounters between individuals. See pages 163, 165, 167-168 in this chapter.

community of a different faith and engages in shared projects of community service, such as supporting a soup kitchen or a clean-up project of river banks, for example.

Clinical Pastoral Education and interreligious action projects can provide settings for the application of Intergroup Contact Theory as they can be conducted in such a way that they meet the facilitating conditions of prejudice reduction. The members in these context share *equal status* within the contact situation. Religious communities that work together to organize interreligious action projects share a *superordinate goal* that encourages cooperation. While members of a CPE group do not work toward one *superordinate goal*, they share common goals, such as learning skills of spiritual care. The intensity of spiritually supporting persons in crisis as well as the common experience of newness and orientation to the role of the chaplain and to the institution can quickly form a bond and superordinate group identity. Some CPE programs encourage cooperation of different students in coverage of patient care units as well as joint projects, such as shared preparation of institutional Interfaith Services. In the CPE context *institutional support* of antiprejudicial norms is widely provided, as many institutional policies and particularly the ACPE Code of Ethics establish norms of respect for the cultural and religious integrity of patients, families, staff members and students. An interreligious action project has increased chances of success if it is supported by the leadership of the local religious communities or even regional institutional religious bodies. Because a CPE course consists of 400 supervised hours of learning, CPE provides intergroup contact over an *extended time*. Interreligious action projects as well should be conducted over an extended time period. Thus, *friendly bonds* between members of different religious groups can easily develop. As Intergroup Contact has been successful

in educational settings with persons of different cultural and ethnic groups, it shows promise to contribute to prejudice reduction among members of different religious traditions as well.

The Process of Stereotype Reduction through Intergroup Contact

The Intergroup Contact Theory has proven to be an effective strategy in combating prejudice. It is important, however, to understand the process by which intergroup contact reduces bias.⁵¹

Intergroup contact can bring about *cognitive change*. We use a variety of mechanisms to maintain group stereotypes and tend to believe in early categorizations as long as we possibly can.⁵² However, new cognitive information about an outgroup has the potential to change stereotypes.⁵³ Thus, interreligious encounters need to include information about the religious practice and beliefs of persons from different religious traditions.

Cognitive processes need to be complemented with other processes, such as *changed behavior*. A changed behavior often leads to a change in attitude, as the dissonance between old prejudices and new behavior can be resolved by a revision of attitudes. Individuals begin to accept members of other groups because they seek to reduce the dissonance they experience between their newly attained attraction and their

⁵¹ Gaertner and Dovidio, Reducing Intergroup Bias, 50.

⁵² Stephan and Stephan, Intergroup Relations, 109.

⁵³ Cf. Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan, "The Role of Ignorance in Intergroup Relations," in Brewer and Miller, Groups in Contact, 229-57.

former stereotypical attitudes.⁵⁴ Repeated contact makes intergroup encounters more comfortable.⁵⁵ Those who engage in intergroup contact not only learn about the outgroup but also about their own group, as they realize that their own norms and customs are not the only ways to manage living and understanding the world. Intergroup contact leads individuals to reevaluate the norms and customs of their ingroup, which can be described as “deprovincialization.”⁵⁶ As mentioned above, emotional and affective factors are important ingredients for intergroup learning that deserve more attention in future research.⁵⁷ In the following I review some research analyzing how intergroup contact can combat prejudice with emphasis on affective change. I will focus in the following particularly on anxiety and empathy.

Anxiety

David Wilder’s experiments support the thesis that anxiety increases our reliance on social stereotypes.⁵⁸ While some anxiety can be functional and motivate persons to constructive action, too much anxiety can be debilitating and create a negative mood that colors our judgement and thus contributes to conflict.⁵⁹ In addition, a person who feels anxious is distracted and therefore relies more on existing schemas and stereotypes rather

⁵⁴ Worchel, “The Role of Cooperation,” 298.

⁵⁵ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 71.

⁵⁶ Pettigrew, “Intergroup Contact Theory,” 71ff.

⁵⁷ Pettigrew and Tropp, 272; Pettigrew, “The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered”, 181.

⁵⁸ Wilder, “The Role of Anxiety,” 87.

⁵⁹ Wilder, “The Role of Anxiety,” 87, 49.

than carefully analyzing the actions of another person.⁶⁰ This is the case not only when anxiety is directly related to the encounter with a person from a different group but also when it is unrelated to the outgroup.⁶¹ It can be concluded that reducing anxiety in the contact situation increases the possibility of stereotype reduction.

Anxiety generates self-focused attention and distracts the perceiver, it encourages relying on stereotypes, and leads to less differentiated perceptions. Creating a negative mood it may color judgment. Thus, reduction of anxiety in the intergroup encounter is a further factor facilitating positive intergroup contact.⁶²

Walter and Cookie Stephan have analyzed intergroup anxiety through the tool of the *Integrated Threat Theory* with four components.⁶³ The first component is *realistic threat* to the physical and economic power of the group. Second, *symbolic threats* may be of particular relevance to interreligious encounters as they involve perceived differences in morals, values, beliefs, and attitudes. These threats arise in part, because the ingroup believes in the moral rightness of its belief system. The feeling that those values are threatened is a cause of prejudice.⁶⁴ Third, *intergroup anxiety* originates the anticipation of negative consequences during intergroup interaction: For example, ingroup members may feel incompetent and unfamiliar when interacting with outgroup members. They may fear that outgroup members will ridicule or reject them. Or they may fear rejection

⁶⁰ Wilder, "The Role of Anxiety," 93.

⁶¹ For a description of the experiments conducted for the study, see Wilder, "The Role of Anxiety," 96-102.

⁶² Wilder, "The Role of Anxiety," 105.

⁶³ Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory," 25-27.

⁶⁴ Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory," 25-27.

from other ingroup members when associating with members of the outgroup. Minimal prior contact with outgroup members as well as little knowledge about them may increase fear.⁶⁵ High levels of intergroup anxiety are associated with lower levels of self-disclosure to outgroup members, especially during initial interactions.⁶⁶ Such fear is sometimes expressed in prejudice or in more subtle forms, such as contact avoidance. Fourth, *negative stereotypes* serve as a basis for the expectations of conflictual or unpleasant interactions with members of the outgroup.

These four threat components influence the attitudes toward outgroups, and contribute to emotions, such as hatred and disdain, as well as evaluations, such as dislike or disapproval. The stronger the identification with the ingroup the greater will likely be the feelings of threat from outgroups.⁶⁷ The greater the frequency of positive contact - through successful, cooperative interactions, for example - the lower the threat.⁶⁸

Facilitators of intergroup contact therefore need to provide opportunity for positive emotional experiences.⁶⁹ Stephan and Stephan argue for a two-tier approach to improve intergroup relations through threat reduction. One tier addresses the cognitive level cultural diversity training programs and information. Intergroup anxiety is more successfully addressed with the second tier, an experiential interactive approach in cooperative learning experiences and intergroup dialogue programs.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Stephan and Stephan, Intergroup Relations, 128-29.

⁶⁶ Stephan and Stephan, Intergroup Relations, 130.

⁶⁷ Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory," 37.

⁶⁸ Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory," 38.

⁶⁹ Kenworthy et al, 287.

⁷⁰ Stephan and Stephan, "An Integrated Threat Theory," 41.

In the context of CPE this means that supervisors need to give attention to anxiety that may not always be expressed. Returning to the introductory vignette, anxiety may well be at the root of some of the group conflicts. The Roman Catholic student may experience *symbolic threat*, a challenge to her religious values when she is asked to change her form of prayer. The Muslim and the gay student both may experience *negative stereotypes and intergroup anxiety*. Prejudice and physical violence toward Muslims after 9/11 is on the rise. The fact that the Muslim student represents a religious minority in the group increases her sense of vulnerability. The gay student may feel vulnerable as he has experienced discrimination from the religious community and as his peers from non-Western countries are even more unfamiliar with openly expressed different sexual orientations. Thus, numerous threat categories may be experienced in the group, yet are never named as anxiety but materialize in mutual critique, assumptions and prejudice.

In addition, many CPE students have to cope with a high level of anxiety as they are new to the role of a chaplain in an institutional setting and work daily with persons in crisis. The CPE curriculum challenges them to give and receive critique and feedback on their spiritual care practice, which requires a certain amount of self-exposure. Therefore, the supervisor needs to monitor the level of anxiety so that it does not become too high and thus exacerbates anxiety related to religious differences within the group. Special attention needs to be given to creating the peer group as a safe space that encourages personal disclosure, normalizes anxiety, and allows group members to express their fears.

Facilitators of interreligious action projects also need to monitor the anxiety level in the group. Especially at the beginning participants may experience intergroup anxiety

as they feel unfamiliar with the customs and beliefs present in members of another religious group. They may be influenced by negative stereotypes even if they do not acknowledge those to themselves and others. As they learn about different beliefs of the other group throughout the course of the project they may experience *symbolic threat*. Thus, the participants in interreligious action projects may enter the endeavor with a great deal of insecurity about what experiences will lie ahead of them. Establishing group norms together, such as respect for different views and reflective listening can create a sense of safety from the onset of the program. Group leaders also can deflate intergroup anxiety by acknowledging and normalizing the presence of feelings and insecurities at the beginning of the project.

Empathy

Empathy increases the perception of a common humanity and destiny and thus enhances the perception of a common identity.⁷¹ Another term describing empathic behavior, perspective-taking, points to the ability to entertain the perspective of another.⁷² It produces empathic arousal that leads the perspective-taker to offer greater assistance to the other person.⁷³ Experiments have supported the assumption that perspective-taking also reduces stereotypic responding and is an effective strategy that promotes positive evaluation of outgroups.⁷⁴ Empathy for a stigmatized outgroup

⁷¹ Kenworthy et al, 287.

⁷² Galinsky and Moskowitz, 708.

⁷³ Galinsky and Moskowitz, 708.

⁷⁴ Galinsky and Moskowitz, 720.

member can improve attitudes toward the whole outgroup.⁷⁵ Perspective-taking leads to a merging of the self and the other and the perspective-taker's thoughts toward the other become more "selflike."⁷⁶ Translated in the context of intergroup relations perspective-taking assimilates representations of the group to the activated self-concept, which then decreases stereotypic responding.⁷⁷ The active consideration of how another person is affected by his or her situation can increase social competence and self-esteem; thus perspective-taking can promote increased intergroup contact, trust, and interdependence in intergroup encounters.⁷⁸

CPE is mandatory for a number of students, for whom it offers a good opportunity for negative stereotype disconfirmation.⁷⁹ Perspective-taking is a valuable tool for CPE groups, as chaplain interns are most effective in their spiritual care when they can offer an empathic presence to patients and families. Thus, as they employ empathy in emotionally supporting a patient of a different faith tradition and thus expand their self and integrate the self of the other, they see the other less in stereotypic patterns but in more closeness to the self. Service-learning programs, such as CPE, bring students in close contact with groups they would otherwise less likely encounter. Christian adults and teenagers assisting Muslim school children with their homework, and Muslim

⁷⁵ Pettigrew, "Intergroup Contact Theory," 72.

⁷⁶ Galinsky and Moskowitz, 709.

⁷⁷ Galinsky and Moskowitz, 720.

⁷⁸ Galinsky and Moskowitz, 708 and 722.

⁷⁹ Salena Maria Brody, Serving a Higher Purpose: How Service-Learning Leads to Improved Intergroup Relations, Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz, 2003. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI 3098738, 10.

teenagers and parents helping Christian students in an after-school program, encourage perspective-taking and experiencing the other in less stereotypic ways.

So far, it has been demonstrated how educational groups for interfaith clergy, such as Clinical Pastoral Education, and congregational groups, such as interreligious action projects, can meet the conditions for effective prejudice reduction. The facilitating *conditions* are summarized in the graph Appendix B: “Prejudice Reduction through Intergroup Contact” as well as in the table Appendix H primarily in the “Beginning Phase.”

In the following I discuss research that has moved beyond facilitating conditions and has developed strategies for stereotype reduction in the facilitation of intergroup encounters. I will illustrate the usefulness of such strategies for the context of interreligious encounters through clinical vignettes from the context of spiritual care and counseling and CPE. The Appendices C – G provide visual depictions of the different strategies.

Strategies for the Facilitation of Intergroup Contact

Attempting to understand more precisely the process of prejudice reduction, much research has been conducted with regard to the development of perceptions and how they are influenced by intergroup contact. Because social categorization and social comparison are factors in the development of intergroup conflict, social psychologists have complemented the Intergroup Contact Theory with concepts from Social Identity Theory when developing interventions to reduce intergroup prejudice and conflict.

Decategorization

The first model drawing upon Social Identity Theory as an integrative framework for intergroup contact and its effects is put forth by Marilyn Brewer and Norman Miller.⁸⁰

Decategorization de-emphasizes group boundaries and aims for persons to experience each other as separate individuals, not as representatives of their groups. In order to reduce prejudice, the process of categorization is interrupted through differentiation and a more personalized processing of information about others.⁸¹ Differentiation does not dissolve group boundaries and categories but allows for differences and more complexity in the perception of members of an outgroup and occurs when a person acquires information that allows to draw distinctions between group members. *Personalized contact* allows person to see a member of a different group not primarily in terms of their category identity. If such personalized contact occurs frequently over an extended period of time, the social category becomes less useful when encountering members of the outgroup.⁸² The decategorization hypothesis holds that stereotype reduction occurs most successfully when the intergroup contact situations promote interpersonal rather than task oriented encounters and when roles, social functions, and status in the situation are perceived to be category-independent.⁸³ It aims to move beyond category based perceptions to more differentiated and personalized perception of outgroup members.

⁸⁰ Brewer and Miller, "Beyond," 283.

⁸¹ Miller and Brewer, "Categorization Effects," 213; Brewer and Miller, "Beyond," 288-89.

⁸² Brewer and Miller, "Beyond," 287-88.

⁸³ Brewer and Miller, "Beyond," 291.

In the context of spiritual care, the concept of decategorization can be utilized in the introductory visit of interfaith chaplains. Many chaplains make a conscious choice to abstain from wearing clothes or symbols that identify them with a particular religious tradition. For other chaplains from different denominations, the wearing of a collar or the kippah is part of the religious identity. As chaplains introduce themselves to patients and families for the first time, however, they should articulate and emphasize their role as interfaith chaplains who support people of all or no particular religious traditions. The development of the spiritual care relationship often begins with decategorization, introducing oneself as a person who cares and who expresses interest in the situation of the partner of the spiritual care relationship. Thus, decategorization is a strategy to connect with the patient/client on the circle of common humanity.

The concept of decategorization has limits, as it can lead to a minimization of difference. Therefore, the concept of mutual differentiation has been developed as a counterbalance. The Appendices C and D depict groups before intergroup contact and the process of decategorization.

Mutual Differentiation

The model of Mutual Differentiation pursues a different direction of stereotype reduction. It maintains that categorizations and stereotypes occur naturally in order to reduce the complexity of information. Ingroup identification can have a positive social and psychological function for one's identity. Therefore, rather than aiming to do away with stereotypes, the simplicity of outgroup stereotypes is challenged.⁸⁴ Intergroup

⁸⁴ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 30.

contact aims to create less monolithic and more differentiated perceptions of the outgroup, while simultaneously the contact situation should emphasize typicality of the outgroup.⁸⁵ Mutual Differentiation maintains the original group boundaries but in the context of intergroup cooperation where similarities and differences are acknowledged and valued. Numerous studies confirm that stereotype-disconfirming information is generalized more effectively to the whole outgroup when it is associated with a group member who is perceived as typical of the group.⁸⁶ The emphasis on the typicality confronts the *re-fencing mechanism*: When a fact cannot fit into a mental field, the exception is acknowledged and the field is hastily fenced again.⁸⁷ A pleasant and positive interaction with an outgroup member accordingly is not integrated by questioning one's stereotype but the outgroup member is seen as an exception to the rule, an atypical representative of an outgroup.⁸⁸ Thus, the contact situation may change for some relationships but does not change perceptions of the outgroup, thus intergroup conflict remains unaltered.

The following vignette from a CPE Group (all students are Christian) may illustrate the re-fencing mechanism. Stephen presents to his peers his social project. This assignment helps CPE interns to familiarize themselves with social system and cultural issues, as they are relevant to hospital chaplaincy and spiritual care. Stephen has gathered some information about the Islamic community in the U.S. He talks about the increase of stereotypes toward Muslims after 9/11, which makes some patients and families fearful to

⁸⁵ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 29.

⁸⁶ Hewstone and Lord, 370, 388.

⁸⁷ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 19.

⁸⁸ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 18.

identify themselves as Muslims when they are admitted to the hospital. Michelle and Peter express some sympathy for the development of stereotypes in the U.S. because of the attacks on 9/11. Stephen challenges their perceptions reminding them of the Muslim physician (Shirin) who is actively involved in the CPE program and teaches students about the Muslim faith. Michelle states: “Not everyone is like Shirin.” During her internship Michelle has had several encounters with the physician and respects her. Yet, she does not see her as a representative the Muslim community, but rather as a special person, an exception. During the course of the discussion Michelle expresses that she is “sick of the critique of Americans and the demands for political correctness”, which she projects onto Stephen, who has challenged her stereotype of Muslims as primarily fundamentalist and anti-Western. In spite of her respect for a Muslim individual, Michelle’s response feels defensive and appears to reveal a need to keep up the fence. The interaction can be utilized as a teaching moment in which the supervisor might introduce the concept of the re-fencing mechanism and invite the group to explore how Shirin is representative of her faith tradition.

In order to generalize positive experiences with outgroup members, contact situations should establish *mutual group differentiation*, according to which each group would see itself positively and hold positive stereotypes toward the outgroup.⁸⁹ Thus, group categories remain salient in order to achieve generalization of positive perceptions to other representatives of outgroups and into to other situations, beyond the particular contact situation. The Appendix E portrays the process of mutual differentiation.

⁸⁹ Hewstone and Brown, “Contact,” 35.

Cross-Categorization

Marilynn Brewer contends in her optimal distinctiveness theory that individuals have a need for inclusion with others in social groups as well as a need for differentiation from others; both drives hold each other in check: When people feel distinct and separate from others they seek inclusion, whereas when they feel immersed in very large groups, the need for individuation is activated. Such needs can differ according to cultural norms.⁹⁰ A high need for certainty, when a threat to one's identity is perceived, may move persons to seek more exclusive group memberships. Such needs can be brought about by economic, political, psychological conditions. Complex societies are structured in a way that persons have overlapping memberships in groups differentiated by ethnicity, gender, religion, and occupation for example. They may identify with multiple ingroups at the same time. As anthropologists and sociologists have established, cross-cutting patterns of differentiation create social stability.⁹¹ Persons or situations that can tolerate uncertainty and complexity may be more open to overlapping identities.⁹² For example, chapter 2 referred to participants in women's interfaith conferences who find common ground in their shared experience as women within their different religious traditions and institutions. Participants in interreligious action projects can get to know each other not just as Christians, Jews, or Muslims, but also as mothers, fathers, teenagers, and neighbors. Although simply introducing crosscutting categories will not *predictably* reduce intergroup bias, overlapping group memberships can render

⁹⁰ Marilynn B. Brewer, "The Social Self: On Being the Same and Different at the Same Time," Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 17 (1991) : 475-482, especially 482. See also Brewer, "Reducing Prejudice Through Cross-Categorization," 177.

⁹¹ Brewer, "Reducing Prejudice," 169.

⁹² Brewer, "Reducing Prejudice," 178.

differences between groups less significant as the person's need for belonging is satisfied by several group identifications.⁹³ The need to derogate other groups is minimized.⁹⁴ Criss-crossing category memberships by forming new subgroups with members of former subgroups create new counteracting social categories.⁹⁵

Rhonda, a United Methodist chaplain intern, responds to a referral from a social worker to visit a Muslim American mother of Palestinian descent (Darshia) whose 2 year old daughter is hospitalized with cancer. Rhonda gathers information to assist Darshia to connect to a Muslim faith community near the hospital. The initial visit develops to a long-term spiritual care relationship over a few months. Initially, Rhonda experiences some intergroup anxiety, as this is her first pastoral relationship with a Muslim family. She has had previous contact with the Muslim community through her local church and is open to engage in interfaith spiritual care. She asks Darshia about her faith and asks her to teach Rhonda the special greeting for Ramadan. Darshia is a devout Muslim who takes her ritual practice seriously. Rhonda summarizes the topics of their conversations about Darshia's culture and her Muslim faith, the care for her child and family and the meaning she makes of her child's illness. Rhonda characterizes her spiritual care as a presence that offers a non-judgmental ear for Darshia to unburden her soul. When asked how she connects to Darshia, Rhonda describes commonalities she discovered with Darshia as women, mothers and persons to whom their faith is important. Unconsciously, Rhonda has utilized cross-categorization to establish points of connection, utilizing the categories of woman, mother, and spirituality. Thus, besides decategorization, cross-categorization

⁹³ Miller, Orban, and Vanman, 413.

⁹⁴ Brewer, "Reducing Prejudice," 170.

⁹⁵ Miller, Orban, and Vanman, 413.

is a strategy to connect with a person of a different religious tradition on the circle of common humanity.

Rhonda can talk about differences as well. For example, she respects but cannot connect to how Darshia makes meaning out of her crisis, as she understands her daughter's illness as God's test for Darshia's faith. When asked how she might have responded to a conservative Christian mother who would understand her child's illness as God's test, Rhonda observes that she might have felt more defensive. The case demonstrates that at times cross-categories can be so strong that dividing lines between persons are drawn not on the basis of religious tradition but according to certain orientations within one's tradition, for example between conservatives and liberals of one faith group. At times ecumenical intergroup encounters can be more challenging than interreligious encounters. The Appendix F depicts the process of cross-categorization.

Recategorization

The recategorization model is also called the Common Ingroup Identity Model, as members of two different groups are induced to see themselves as members of a single, more inclusive superordinate group. The superordinate group is "created" by making more salient already existing superordinate memberships and changing perceptions from "us versus them" to "we". As a consequence, attitudes toward former outgroup members become more positive.⁹⁶ For example, many people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds understand themselves as Americans.

⁹⁶ Gaertner et al., "Across Cultural Divides," 179; Dovidio et al., "Reducing Contemporary Prejudice," 153.

⁹⁶ Dovidio et al., "Reducing Contemporary Prejudice," 151.

This model is closely connected to the idea of introducing superordinate goals and cooperation into the contact situation. Introducing a superordinate identity can bring about more personalized interactions with outgroup members with the potential of longer lasting positive relations between groups.⁹⁷ Recategorization is therefore compatible with the decategorization model as well as with the model of mutual differentiation. The development of a common group identity does not require that members give up their former less inclusive membership. Persons can hold dual identities simultaneously, and social cohesion does not require that individuals deny their ethnic identity.⁹⁸ However, there is a caveat which needs consideration: If members of an ingroup experience the superordinate group as a threat to the positive distinctiveness of their group, intergroup prejudice might be exacerbated. Also, majority members have an interest in assimilation of the outgroup members into one single culture whereas minority groups have an interest to retain their cultural identity. Thus, the introduction of a superordinate group could in some cases threaten a person's social identity, which in turn can intensify intergroup conflict.⁹⁹ There is also the possibility that a new common ingroup will simply shift the conflict to other groups that are scapegoated.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, when recategorization is

⁹⁷ Gaertner et al, "Across Cultural Divides," 200.

⁹⁸ Gaertner et al, "Across Cultural Divides," 195.

⁹⁹ Dovidio et al "Reducing Contemporary Prejudice," 157.

¹⁰⁰ This hypothesis is supported by evidence of a study in the context of the reunification in Germany where former East and West Germans have formed a new in-group identity. However, this new group identity has led to another level of categorization as xenophobia has increased since the reunification. Thus, the conflict is resolved by searching for a weaker target, the minority of foreigners in Germany. Thomas Kessler and Amélie Mummendey, "Is there Any Scapegoat around? Determinants of Intergroup Conflicts at Different Categorization Levels," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 81, no. 6 (2001): 1100.

considered as an intervention one needs to bear in mind power dynamics and different interests of the groups involved.

Recategorization is not a recipe fit for all conflict situations, but when used considering the conditions of the conflict situation, it can be a powerful strategy to overcome intergroup conflict. CPE has the potential to develop a common group identity, as the students together confront the challenge to become familiar in a new setting and in group sessions can offer support and feedback. It depends on the facilitation as well as the personality of the group members whether the group develops a “we”-identity. Is interreligious learning one goal, it is important for the facilitator to utilize techniques that would support the development of a common ingroup identity. In interreligious action projects the development of a “we”-identity can be supported through the introduction of a name for the action group, regular rituals at the beginning and closing of group meetings and presentations at events of the larger religious communities where the group receives visible representation. The graph Appendix G portrays the process of recategorization.

A Combined Approach

Thomas Pettigrew points out that similarities as well as differences are important in intergroup encounters and need balanced attention.¹⁰¹ As I have argued in previous chapters that in theological approaches the global and the local, the concrete and the universal should be held in a creative tension, a similar concern is expressed by social psychologists when it comes to the facilitation of intergroup encounters. On the one hand

¹⁰¹ Pettigrew, “The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered,” 184.

personalization and empathy, disrupting the categorization process and emphasizing common humanity, and on the other hand mutual differentiation, maintaining difference and group boundaries, are approaches that are both needed and that hold each other in check. Recent studies support a combined use these different approaches, emphasizing the importance of intimacy of contact and personalization while keeping some level of category salience.¹⁰² Depersonalization should occur first, and the next stage would reintroduce the group category salience. A third stage is represented by recategorization, the introduction of a common superordinate group identity.¹⁰³

Simple strategies for the introduction of a common ingroup can be seating arrangements that interrupt group boundaries and allow for more intimate contact between members of different groups.¹⁰⁴ Cognitive priming is another strategy that can be employed: the use of a simple ingroup designator, such as “we” for the new superordinate group can influence a more positive perception of former outgroup members.¹⁰⁵ Positive affect has been found to increase a favorable orientation toward others, and thus lead to more openness when group relations are cooperative or neutral. However, when groups have competitive or antagonistic relations, positive affect may increase perceptions of distrust, enhancing bias.¹⁰⁶ When a group experiences heated conflict, the group needs to work through it and will perceive positive affect as

¹⁰² Kenworthy et al, 282; Brewer, “Reducing Prejudice,” 166.

¹⁰³ Kenworthy et al, 284.

¹⁰⁴ Gaertner and Dovidio, Reducing Intergroup Bias, 56.

¹⁰⁵ Gaertner and Dovidio, Reducing Intergroup Bias, 105.

¹⁰⁶ John F. Dovidio et al., “Positive Affect, Cognition, and the Reducation of Intergroup Bias,” in Sedikides, Schopler, and Insko, 348; 360.

manipulation or cover up. When groups have no history of previous conflict or the groups cooperate with each other, positive affect produces more inclusive representation and people have more favorable outgroup attitudes and lower levels of bias than those in neutral moods.¹⁰⁷

Decategorization, mutual differentiation, cross-categorization, and recategorization together represent a toolbox that can help group facilitators to deepen and improve intergroup relations and help constructively manage conflict that occurs in intergroup encounters.

Working through Conflict

In a CPE group of five students and two supervisors two Jewish students represent a religious minority as the rest of the group consists of participants of different Christian denominations. At mid-unit the group sets aside a day to give each other feedback and share how they have experienced their learning process and their time together as a group so far. Overall, all participants report positive learning experiences. The Jewish students voice their astonishment that they have not learned much about the significance of Jesus in the faith and spiritual work of their peers. They wonder whether their peers and supervisor have been overprotective for fear of offending their Jewish peers and encourage them to be more open to share with them about what is important to their faith even if it is different from the tradition of their Jewish peers.

The group has moved into a working phase and has established enough safety to discuss differences. However, the Jewish students challenge the group to be more

¹⁰⁷ Gaertner and Dovidio, Reducing Intergroup Bias, 127.

authentic in their self-expression. Donald Taylor and Fathali Moghaddam point to the Illusion-of-Contact phenomenon: persons tend to keep contact with members of out-groups harmonious by keeping the contact at a superficial level. The peers in this CPE group may ask if differences in beliefs have been a taboo so far for fear of conflict. Another common mechanism of conflict avoidance is the denial of tensions or the attribution of tensions to individuals rather than as a conflict between the groups.¹⁰⁸

Conflict is a part of the group process development toward more authentic relations. Not all intergroup encounters are experienced as conflictual. Moderate amount of conflict can be positive and move to creative solutions of problems, can motivate persons to engage in problem solving.¹⁰⁹ The goal of Intergroup Contact Theory is not to eliminate conflict, but to reduce or to deal constructively with existing conflicts between persons of different religious groups based on prejudice and stereotype. It can also assist to move intergroup relations beyond a superficial level when conflict is avoided. The history of Anti-Judaism in the Christian tradition is an influential factor in present relationships between Christians and Jews. Such conflicts may surface when CPE students from these different contexts encounter each other in one group. The participants in this CPE group from the Christian tradition may ask themselves whether unconscious or unresolved guilt feelings about the history of Anti-Judaism in their own tradition may cause them to be extra-cautious about sharing their belief in Christ. The challenge of their Jewish peers thus may be an opportunity to engage their encounter with the Jewish tradition on a deeper level. Intergroup Contact Theory should not be understood as a form

¹⁰⁸ Taylor and Moghaddam, 184ff.

¹⁰⁹ Worchel, "The Role of Cooperation," 304.

of social engineering that could get rid of these kinds of conflicts. Rather, the conflicts and their political and historical roots should be acknowledged and addressed.

On the other hand, conflict that is not managed can get out of hand. The CPE group in the introductory vignette experienced conflict due to cultural and religious differences and was not able to resolve such conflicts. A possible supervisory intervention could be the invitation to the group to express whether and how they experienced stereotypes in the group. A workshop on stereotypes, social identity and social categorization might provide information and a larger context for the feelings of group members. Such cognitive concepts might normalize the experiences of group participants and provide some boundaries. The students might teach each other about Islam, gay and lesbian identity, and their cultural contexts from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In addition, the supervisor might encourage empathy, decategorization, and cross-categorization in group sessions when students clash with each other in order to provide containment.

Summary and Conclusion

I have described how the Intergroup Contact Hypothesis, complemented with concepts from Social Identity Theory, can contribute to prejudice reduction in interreligious relations. It provides spiritual care givers and counselors, their clinical supervisors, institutional chaplains, and congregational pastors with methodological tools for the constructive facilitation of group encounters between persons of different religious traditions. The strategies are summarized in the table Appendix H.

Most of the concepts presented in this chapter lend themselves to education and activities in group settings. However, some the concepts (decategorization, cross-

categorization, mutual differentiation) can illuminate and support individual encounters between persons of different faiths in the context of spiritual care, as well.

CPE groups and interreligious action projects are appropriate contexts for Intergroup Contact Theory because they can meet facilitating conditions for prejudice reduction. These contexts provide *equal status* for participants and are conducted over an extended time period so that *bonds and friendships* can develop. They foster *cooperation*, for example, in the coverage of patient care units in a CPE program or in the organization of a shared community service project. The group experiences are based on *common goals*, such as the learning of spiritual care or shared social action in a particular local neighborhood, such as environmental clean up or support for a local population with many needs, such as homeless persons. In order to be successful they need *institutional support* from local and regional leadership of religious communities. In ACPE institutional support is provided through the Code of Ethics, which calls members to respect for different religious traditions.

In both contexts methods for stereotype reduction include *cognitive components* in the form of information about the different groups but focus on *experiential learning* experiences. As both contexts provide service to others they provide opportunities for participants to develop *empathy and perspective-taking*, which relies less on stereotypes but sees the other more “selflike”.

The facilitation of interreligious encounters in such group settings needs to give careful attention to wounds caused by religious discrimination and to *anxiety*. Some participants may bring the experience of being stigmatized to the group. Especially at the beginning of the groups, participants may experience fears of rejection and negative

stereotypes. They may feel incompetent and unfamiliar when interacting with the members of a different religious group. Participants may feel threatened in their own beliefs and values. It is important reduce anxiety as much as possible and to create a safe space, in which anxieties can be normalized and expressed. This can be achieved by the development of group norms such as respect for different views and values and reflective listening.

The beginning phase of the groups should emphasize *decategorization* and give participants a chance to get to know each other as persons. Many CPE groups close their orientation with a group-building day that provides an opportunity for the group members to tell their stories, get to know each other and discover commonalities. A religious community cooperative could begin with a shared meal during which Christians and Muslims, for example, can get to know each other as women and men, teenagers, parents, and citizens in the same neighborhood (*cross-categorization*). The movement toward decategorization in a second phase is balanced through mutual differentiation. Participants are invited to share about their particular beliefs, differences are acknowledged and conflicts are worked through. *Recategorization* emphasizes a common group identity as many CPE groups have the potential to develop a sense of a “we-identity”. For religious community cooperatives it may be helpful to develop a special name and to mark accomplishments with celebrations. *Cross-categorization* can be a tool to help peers in a CPE groups or chaplains relating to a member of a different tradition to connect. The supervisor may introduce cross-categorization as a way of reframing an encounter and invite peers or a chaplain who have difficulties to connect with a person of a different faith to think of commonalities and connections. In the supervision of spiritual

care mechanisms of decategorization and cross-categorization which decrease the sense of boundaries between a spiritual caregiver and a careseeker of a different tradition can be introduced. Both are strategies to form a connection on the *circle of a common humanity*.

The strategy of *mutual differentiation* aims to maintain the awareness of particular differences. Utilized in group settings it helps prevent the re-fencing mechanism according to which the positive encounter with a person from another religious tradition is interpreted as an exception to the rule and old stereotypes can be maintained. Mutual differentiation, thus, aims to take the encounter with another to the next level, the questioning and changing of stereotypes. The concept of mutual differentiation prevents the minimizing of differences and of the particular and thus means empowerment for groups with less power or in a minority status. In the context of spiritual care and counseling mutual differentiation corresponds to the *circle of particular spiritual practice* and can function as a safeguard for the spiritual caregiver to not assimilate the beliefs and concerns of the careseeker into the own value system.

Further applications of Intergroup Contact Theory to the context of CPE and congregational care will be discussed in the following chapter which integrates the results of all previous chapters in the formulation of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters.

CHAPTER 6

Facilitating the Quilting Bee - Towards a Glocal Didactic of Interreligious Encounters

Introduction

Intergroup Contact Theory has exerted a strong influence on multicultural education in a variety of settings. A variety of intergroup relations programs have developed in school settings, higher education, workplaces, and local communities in order to bring groups of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in closer contact. A closer look at some of these programs can be informative for the development of a glocal didactic of interreligious groups. Therefore, before I describe in concrete detail the facilitation of interreligious encounters in group learning experiences, I briefly review some characteristics of Intergroup Relations Programs and investigate what can be learned from these programs for a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters. Then, implications of Intergroup Contact Theory for the facilitation of CPE programs and interreligious action projects are addressed. The graphs and table in the Appendices provide an overview of the methodological tools and their application to both contexts.

Finally, the results of the discussions in previous chapters are integrated and summarized in a conclusion, and further areas of research are recommended.

Interreligious Groups in Contact

Review of Selected Literature and Characteristics of Intergroup Relations Programs

Cherry A. McGee Banks provides a historical analysis of the influence of the intergroup movement on multicultural education.¹ Education Programs for Improving Intergroup Relations. Theory, Research, and Practice, edited by Walter G. Stephan and W. Paul Vogt, provides an overview over theoretical and practical issues of a variety of different types of intergroup relations programs.² The publication Intergroup Dialogue. Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community, and Workplace, edited by David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado, concentrates on one sub-type of intergroup relations programs, intergroup dialogue programs.³ Besides a number of concrete case examples, the essay collection contains a directory of Intergroup Dialogue Programs and Organizations.⁴ The concepts reviewed in this section are primarily taken up from the latter two publications. Other resources focus on issues of multicultural education and diversity in higher education and the classroom, including voices and vignettes from diverse cultural contexts.⁵

¹ Cherry A. McGee Banks, Improving Multicultural Education: Lessons from the Intergroup Education Movement, Multicultural Education Series (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005).

² Walter G. Stephan and W. Paul Vogt, eds. Education Programs for Improving Intergroup Relations: Theory, Research, and Practice, Multicultural Education Series, (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004).

³ David Schoem and Sylvia Hurtado, eds., Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative Democracy in School, College, Community, and Workplace (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

⁴ Jonathan Hutson, "A Directory of Intergroup Dialogue Programs and Organizations," in Schoem and Hurtado, 345-52.

⁵ David Schoem, Linda Frankel, Ximena Zúñega, and Edith A. Lewis, eds., Multicultural Teaching in the University (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993); Richrad Guarasci and Grant H. Cornwell, eds., Democratic Education in an Age of Difference: Redefining Citizenship in Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997); Carl Grant, ed., Educating for Diversity: An Anthology of Multicultural Voices (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995); John N. Hawkins and Thomas J. La Belle, eds.,

Walter Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan provide a typology of intergroup relations programs.⁶ All intergroup relations programs utilize in varying degrees didactic as well as interactive teaching methods.⁷ In order to determine appropriate methods and strategies, it should be assessed whether the problems to be addressed are primarily conscious or unconscious, cognitive or spontaneous and affective.⁸

The contexts of Clinical Pastoral Education as well as interreligious action projects emphasize experiential learning but may include some cognitive elements of instruction and discussion. Both settings have many similarities with Cooperative Learning Groups addressing primarily experiential and affective dimensions with the purpose of changing attitudes, stereotypes, and feelings as well as of community building and social action. The primary goal of intergroup dialogue groups is the improvement of intergroup relations through direct dialogue about mutual relationships. CPE groups have broader goals, such as the development of professional competencies of spiritual care. Interreligious relationships are addressed directly at times, at other times indirectly. The

Education and Intergroup Relations: An International Perspective (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1985) develop a typology of Intergroup Relations and relate it to educational practices and policies in countries all over the world.

⁶ *Multicultural Education* emphasizes didactic techniques and information about different ethnic, racial, cultural and religious groups as well as concepts of prejudice, stereotype and racism. Another direct approach is represented in *Group Retraining Models*, and *Intergroup Dialogues* with face-to-face discussions and experiential exercises among members of two groups. *Cooperative Learning Groups* approach intergroup relations indirectly by utilizing a format of interaction that aims at improving intergroup relations without addressing them in content. It has been used in schools, utilizing teaching methods according to which students can only reach their goals by cooperating with others. Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan, "Intergroup Relations Program Evaluation," in Dovidio, Glick and Rudman, 431-46, especially 433; 435; 437. Zūniga and Nagda distinguish four orientations: collective inquiry, critical-educational, community building and social action, conflict resolution and peace-building. Ximena Zūniga, and Biren (Ratnesh) Nagda, "Design Considerations in Intergroup Dialogue," in Schoem and Hurtado, 306-27. See especially 307-09.

⁷ Stephan and Vogt, "Introduction," 7. Stephan, Walter G. "Conclusion: Understanding Intergroup Relations Programs," in Stephan and Vogt, 268.

⁸ Dovidio, John F. et al, "From Intervention to Outcome: Processes in the Reduction of Bias," in Stephan and Vogt, 264.

primary goal of interreligious action projects is shared action to address social problems in the local community. In this process interreligious relationships are dealt with primarily indirectly. While both settings differ in their orientation from intergroup dialogue groups, some characteristics can be applied. In the following paragraphs I will describe selected characteristics and describe implications for the CPE context as well for the local congregation.

Intergroup dialogue represents a community based effort to teach responsibility for justice and democracy.⁹ Intergroup dialogue programs have developed on college university campuses in the late 1980's as well as workplaces and local communities and neighborhoods.¹⁰ Within the higher education arena, intergroup dialogues are defined as facilitated, face-to-face encounters between two or more social identity groups that have either a potential or a history of conflict.¹¹ Activities include experiential exercises and simulations, dialogues in pairs and small groups, as well as action projects outside of the group setting.¹² For instance, part of the activities of the National Conference for Community Justice (NCCJ) are intergroup dialogue projects. The NCCJ was founded as

⁹ David Schoem et al., "Intergroup Dialogue: Democracy at Work in Theory and Practice," in Schoem and Hurtado, 4; general goals of multicultural education and intergroup dialogue are: appreciation of multicultural heritage, communication across group boundaries, promotion of democratic and pluralistic principles, appreciation of human rights, combating prejudice, ethnocentrism, racism, and violence, understanding the worldviews of other groups, increasing moral reasoning and critical thinking, promoting justice and perspective taking, understanding how social institutions shape relations between groups, promoting social action as well as coexistence, locally and internationally. Walter G. Stephan, "Conclusion," in Stephan and Vogt, 269-71; , Biren (Ratnesh) Nagda and Amelia Seraphia Derr, "Intergroup Dialogue: Embracing Difference, and Conflict, Engendering Community," in Stephan and Vogt, 135.

¹⁰ Martha McCoy and Michael McCormick, "Engaging the Whole Community in Dialogue and Action: Study Circles Resource Center," in Schoem and Hurtado, 137. Sylvia Hurtado, "Research and Evaluation on Intergroup Dialogue," in Schoem and Hurtado, 23.

¹¹ Nagda and Derr, 134.

¹² David Schoem et al, "Intergroup Dialogue: Democracy at Work in Theory and Practice," in Schoem and Hurtado, 7-14. Nagda, and Derr, 134.

The National Conference of Christian and Jews engaging diverse faith communities in dialogue to reduce stereotypes and the injustices they cause. The NCCJ's mission is to develop whole and inclusive communities by tackling its barriers of discrimination and oppression based on religion, race, gender, and sexual orientation through policy advocacy, research, and consultation on intergroup relations.¹³

Many intergroup dialogue programs have in common the following phases:¹⁴

(1) The beginning phase opens the dialogue group with an introduction of the concepts of intergroup dialogue as well as an introduction of the group members. Participants learn about different cultures and get to know each other personally. Group rules are developed and communication skills are introduced. (2) The working phase allows for learning about commonalities and differences. Concepts of social identity, prejudice, oppression and 'isms' are introduced.¹⁵ Controversial and current intergroup conflicts are actively engaged and worked through.¹⁶ (3) During the closing phase participants envision how they can become change agents for a more just multicultural society in their concrete contexts. Often the course ends with a celebrative ceremony during which participants may present results of their learning.¹⁷

¹³ National Conference for Community and Justice; accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://nccj.org> ; Wayne Winborne and Allison Smith, "Not Just Dialogue for Dialogue's Sake: The National Conference for Community and Justice," in Schoem and Hurtado, 166-77. See especially 166.

¹⁴ Nagda and Derr, 141; Züniga and Nagda, 313ff.

¹⁵ Nagda, Biren (Ratnesh) et al, "Intergroup Dialogue, Education, and Action: Innovation at the University of Washington School of Social Work," in Schoem and Hurtado, 119.

¹⁶ Applied to the context of interreligious encounters, see the section "Working through Conflict" in Chapter 5.

¹⁷ Nagda, 119.

Techniques of Intergroup Dialogue Groups include lectures, readings, class discussions, invited speakers, videos, and interactive exercises, such as role playing, simulation games, journal keeping, ethnic vignettes and case histories, field trips, celebratory events.¹⁸

Implications for the CPE Curriculum and Group Facilitation

Service Learning. College campuses increasingly utilize learning settings in which students provide some volunteer activities in the community. Service learning helps students to experience a sense of connectedness and to develop abilities of caring and cooperation.¹⁹ Community service can demystify the ‘other’.²⁰ CPE is one example of experiential service learning as theological students and chaplain interns learn about spiritual care through the praxis of spiritual support to persons in crisis from a variety of backgrounds. Verbatims and case studies can be utilized to focus on spiritual care relationships of interns with persons of a different culture or faith tradition by involving readings on that particular culture and tradition.

Considerations of Structure and Learning Techniques. Structurally, interreligious resources should be integrated in the CPE program, in the representation in the advisory board of the spiritual care department and the CPE program. Board members from different religious traditions can take on a consulting role and actively participate in the

¹⁸ Stephan, “Conclusion,” 271.

¹⁹ Richard Guarasci and Grant H. Cornwell, “Democracy and Difference: Emerging Concepts of Identity, Diversity, and Community,” in Guarasci and Cornwell, 11. Guarasci, “Community-Based Learning and Intercultural Citizenship,” in Guarasci and Cornwell, 19.

²⁰ Richard Guarasci, “Community-Based Learning and Intercultural Citizenship,” in Guarasci and Cornwell, 25.

curriculum. An increasing number of hospitals have departments for cultural services and conduct cultural competency programs, which can provide areas of cooperation for CPE programs. As intergroup dialogue programs need to consider the emotional and social maturity of students, the CPE admissions interview can be used to assess the openness of participants to religious diversity as well as provide clear and transparent information about goals and methods from the beginning.²¹

A number of techniques that facilitate an understanding of interreligious relations can be developed. For example, I have applied and modified the use of cultural autobiographies as reading material in a college course for the small-group context of CPE.²² Each student presents a socio-cultural narrative to the peer group during one CPE course. The reflection of a Palestinian CPE student at the beginning of chapter 3 is a part of such a narrative. This learning tool provides an opportunity to reflect on students' memberships in particular religious, cultural and ethnic groups in the context of their personal life experiences and provides a window into the experiences of others.

Some CPE programs have experimented with an inclusion of didactic instruction about 'isms' as part of the CPE curriculum. Students teach each other in didactic sessions on racism, sexism, and heterosexism in the context of spiritual care by utilizing their own experiences with these 'isms' rather than having external information deposited.²³ As students share and face their own experiences, a non-judgmental attitude toward others is

²¹ Stephan, "Conclusion," 274.

²² Compare the use of cultural autobiographies in Carl Grant, Educating for Diversity, "Preface," xxii.

²³ Cameron W. Byrd, "Inclusiveness in a Basic Unit of Clinical Pastoral Education: A Story of Struggle, Risk, and Commitment," Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 14 (1992/1993) : 205f.

promoted.²⁴ In a yearlong CPE residency, consisting of three or four CPE units, one unit could be set aside to focus on interreligious spiritual care. Such a unit can include didactic seminars on theology of religious pluralism as well as basic information of different faith traditions as well as basic theory about social identity, stereotype, and prejudice. The latter topics can be explored with the example of historical development of Anti-Judaism and the Holocaust.²⁵ Such an examination brings to awareness historical dimensions of intergroup conflicts and can help Christian students, for example, to confront the history of Anti-Judaism in Christianity and reflect on how this shapes their relationships with Jewish peers, and patients and how it may impact their pastoral care.

Field trips to different houses of worship and cooperation in the facilitation of inclusive worship experiences introduce participants to important celebrations and rituals of other communities. For example, CPE students can work together in the preparation of celebrations of religious holidays open to all patients, families, and staff in their institutional setting, and thus learn about the significance of Diwali, Ramadan, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, Passover, Easter, for example. The students from different religious traditions are experts of their culture and religion and are encouraged to share their world with their peers. They may share news from their religious communities, worship elements from their cultures and traditions and are given space to express themselves in their native language.²⁶

²⁴ Byrd, 208f.

²⁵The organization "Facing History and Ourselves" provides resources to examine racism, prejudice, and Anti-Semitism; accessed September 6, 2006; available from <http://www.facinghistory.org>.

²⁶ Mark Grace, "Thinking Through Pastoral Education with Culturally Diverse Peer Groups," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 22 (2002) : 30.

Group Facilitation. CPE groups have in common with many dialogue groups a basic structure of development phases. (1) The beginning phase is taken up by orientation to the hospital and closes with a day set aside for group building. Students share their stories, discover commonalities and get to know each other as persons. This group phase provides opportunities for decategorization and cross-categorization. The content and assignments of the curriculum as well as communication norms and ground rules developed together at the beginning should reflect a diversity of cultures and religious traditions. (2) The working phase allows room for mutual differentiation, as differences come to the surface and their expression is encouraged. While community is fostered, the expression of differences and the active engagement of conflicts is encouraged. Ties are formed through dialogue leading to greater understanding rather than justification of a particular viewpoint.²⁷ Integration of theory and practice, the development of empathy and perspective taking as well as active listening are objectives for the training of professional chaplains. Those skills can be practiced in the peer group and thus nurture a climate of constructive dialogue.²⁸ (3) During the closing phase numerous CPE groups conduct a closing ritual, a ceremony of course completion, celebrating the accomplishments of each group member and the group as a whole, which emphasizes recategorization, a common group identity. The final evaluation allows room for a reflection on the meaning of encounters with peers and patients from other traditions, how they have changed and what they mean for the future clinical work of participants. Thus, CPE is a viable context for the application of strategies and techniques from

²⁷ Nagda and Derr, 138.

²⁸ Association for Clinical Pastoral Education: Standards Manual; accessed September 5, 2006; available <http://www.acpe.edu/standards.htm>. See CPE outcomes and objectives 312.2; 312.3; 312.6.

intergroup relations and dialogue programs. A stronger focus on interreligious relations, implies some shifts and changes for the approach to supervision in CPE as well.

Understanding of CPE Supervision. The goal of nurturing constructive interreligious encounters implies a clear focus on supervision as education. Many CPE programs include the element of IPR, Interpersonal Relations Group, a non-agenda time where students can share about their clinical experiences, their learning, offer and receive support and critique. This element of the CPE curriculum also provides opportunities to learn about group dynamics through their own group experience. Joan Hemenway points to a one-sided individualistic approach to group sessions in the culture of CPE. She appropriately challenges CPE supervisors to develop a group-as-a-whole approach, to articulate a clear group theory and apply it to group work in CPE.²⁹ Hemenway's own group theory is based on psychoanalytic theory and she understands group facilitation as having both educational and therapeutic elements.³⁰

However, her approach to group work raises the concern that in much of the practice of CPE the boundary between supervision and therapy is blurred. First, therapeutic work in the CPE context is problematic as most CPE supervisors do not have therapeutic training. Secondly, CPE students come to CPE to learn spiritual care. Thus, personal therapeutic issues that might arise during a CPE course should be acknowledged and referred to a therapist. While supervisors need conceptual tools to understand and facilitate group processes in CPE, they need to be clear about and respect the boundaries between education and therapy. Keith Little provides a helpful

²⁹ Joan E. Hemenway, Inside the Circle. A Historical and Practical Inquiry Concerning Process Groups in Clinical Pastoral Education (N.p. Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1996), 196.

³⁰ Hemenway, 145, 196.

understanding for the use of clarification, confrontation, reflection, interpretation, parallel process, transference and countertransference in supervision as focused on clinical practice and not therapeutic intervention or personal development. Little points out that CPE supervision is an “educational process focused on the needs of the patient and the process of learning to recognize and respond to those needs.”³¹ The increasing diversity of students from different cultural and religious backgrounds makes it even more problematic to use one (most often Western) psychotherapeutic model for group facilitation. In order to work with students from different cultural and religious contexts, supervisors need to have clarity about their focus on education.

As self-awareness is an important skill for professional spiritual care, some CPE programs emphasize strongly self-insight, personal self-disclosure, and confrontation. These primarily Western therapeutic values may be foreign to and overwhelm students from different cultural and religious contexts. Supervision and group facilitation thus needs to be flexible and allow all students space to express their cultural and religious values.³² Requiring self-disclosure and confrontation from students from high context cultures (and many Western students as well) can cause group members to feel unsafe and increase the anxiety level in the group. In addition, many CPE students find themselves for the first time in their life in a situation where they are called upon to support persons in crisis. Thus, the anxiety level in CPE groups, especially at the beginning, is already high. As pointed out in Chapter 5, increased anxiety, even if it is unrelated to the intergroup encounter, can cause persons to rely more strongly on

³¹ N. Keith Little, “Supervision.: Education or Therapy?” Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry 19 (1998/1999) : 158.

³² For examples see the section “Considerations of Structure and Learning Techniques” above.

stereotypical perceptions. Thus, it is important to monitor the anxiety level in the group and to create a safe space, in which students from different contexts and cultures can find their voice.

Since the orientation of intergroup dialogue (*and* CPE) is educational and not therapeutic, issues of personal identity and social identities need to be balanced. For example, participants may resist perceiving themselves as oppressed or oppressors (race and gender relations), partly in order to avoid the pain associated with the identification. On the other hand, this resistance may reflect a lack of experience with structural issues.³³ The U.S culture emphasizes the individual, and systems and structural issues may be a new concept for students as well as facilitators. As argued in chapter 4, interreligious relations include issues of social group membership. Through conflict exploration, participants come to understand not only personal but also social tensions as well as ways in which they collude in and challenge social systems.³⁴ A stronger attention to cultural and religious differences in CPE thus includes a social systems and social justice perspective in the curriculum as well as supervisory assessments. The development of a theory for supervision as well as spiritual care needs to include socio-cultural analysis, as has been pointed out in Chapter 4.

Finally, in Chapter 3 it has been affirmed that theological approaches toward religious pluralism matter for the openness to engage the religiously Other. Therefore, spiritual care givers as well as CPE supervisors need to articulate their own theological

³³ Diana Kardia and Todd Sevig, "Embracing the Paradox: Dialogue That Incorporates Both Individual and Group Identities," in Schoem and Hurtado, 247-65. See especially 252.

³⁴ Nagda and Derr, 136. Kardia and Sevig, 255-56. David Schoem et al., "The Meaning of Multicultural Teaching: An Introduction, in Schoem et al., Multicultural Teaching, 1-12. See especially, see 2, 7. Nagda and Derr, 137.

stance from which they approach the religious pluralism that presents itself in the population of their clinical settings as well their supervisees. CPE supervisory education consequently needs to include training in some of the theories of religious pluralism and its social context as well as social identity theory in order to enrich supervisors' capabilities to integrate intergroup dialogue elements into the CPE curriculum.³⁵

Implications for Interreligious Action Projects

There are theological and psychological reasons to focus interreligious encounters between local religious communities on shared action. It is argued above that human suffering on the local and global level provides a theological impetus for religious communities to get involved and requires a coordinated response of different religious communities. With regard to psychological factors, the indirect approach to interreligious relations in cooperative programs might present lower inhibition levels for participants than a direct engagement of mutual relationships. Shared action programs, thus, are more likely to attract persons that are not already interested in interreligious issues and less inclined to learn about other religious communities through discussion or cognitive approaches.³⁶

Examples of Interreligious Action Projects. The InterFaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington DC (IFC) is a model of community based social action. It was

³⁵ Ruby L. Beale, Monita C. Thompson, and Mark Chesler, "Training Peer Facilitators for Intergroup Dialogue Leadership," in Schoem and Hurtado, 227-46. See especially 227, 229f. For facilitator competency assessment see 233-35.

³⁶ McCoy and McCormick, 145 point out that populations of lower income are less interested to participate in intergroup dialogue programs. This may be the case for persons with less advanced education. Mike Goggin, Assistant Director of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC) reported in a personal conversation on September 5, 2006 that action programs have been most successful with youth.

founded in 1978 with ten member faith communities with the goal to build a just community through coalition building, education, training, and advocacy. Activities include interfaith concerts and prayer services, lectures, visits to different religious communities, congregational partnership projects, interfaith youth programs, and involvement in local justice projects, such as food banks, coalition for the homeless, and housing.³⁷ The IFC has successfully conducted community projects with youth from different religious traditions. Participants meet on weekends to participate in projects with Habitat for Humanity, environmental tasks, such as cleaning up river banks, and helping seniors de-clutter their homes to prevent evictions.³⁸ The IFC has developed their youth program on the basis of the model of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) in Chicago which targets teens and college-aged young adults for social action programs and multi-school partnerships.³⁹ The IFYC “uses social action as a starting point at which youth from diverse backgrounds gather and build relationships with each other.”⁴⁰

Both organizations can offer resources for local religious communities who engage in shared social action. A global didactic of interreligious encounters can provide facilitators with some methodological steps that can navigate them through the challenging task of facilitating such a shared project.

³⁷ InterFaithConference of Metropolitan Washington (IFC); accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://ifcmw.org>.

³⁸ Phone conversation with Mike Goggin, September 5, 2006.

³⁹ Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC); accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://www.ifyc.org/program.php>.

⁴⁰ Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Theory and Model – A Theory of Social Change; accessed September 5, 2006; available from <http://www.ifyc.org/program.php>.

Considerations of Structure. The development of a shared action project benefits from realizing facilitating conditions for prejudice reduction, as outlined in Intergroup Contact Theory. *Institutional support* should be sought by involving the whole community if possible, but at least the local and regional leadership in the decision for a shared project. *Equal status* is achieved by recruiting participants and distributing roles among members from participating communities in equal numbers. As interreligious groups may be comprised of persons with diverse cultural backgrounds, Eric Law's understanding of justice and power in an ethno-relative way may provide helpful guidelines for the facilitation of groups. The perception of power is one's degree of acceptance of inequality.⁴¹ Often people of color in US society perceive themselves as relatively powerless. The concept of leadership depends on the group members' perception of their own power.⁴² In an ethnocentric way, most whites believe that inequality can be countered by simply physically including the disadvantaged. But justice in a multicultural setting has to be approached in an ethno-relative way, which means that participants in a disadvantaged position may need to be empowered, while those in a more powerful position, may need to be asked to give up and share power.⁴³

The project focuses on *cooperation and common goals*. The goals of the project should be based on needs of the local community and developed and fine-tuned together. *Friendships* can potentially develop as such a project requires extended periods of time. In large groups of participants smaller teams should be formed.

⁴¹ Eric H. F. Law, The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993), 15.

⁴² Law, 30.

⁴³ Law, 35.

Group Facilitation. The groups can be structured following the three phases outlined above. (1) The beginning phase may involve a shared meal in small groups where participants learn about each others' cultural and religious traditions and can get to know each other personally as women and men, parents, schoolchildren or teenagers, and neighbors in a particular neighborhood. This phase provides opportunities for decategorization and cross-categorization. The project goals are formulated together, the project is planned together. (2) The working phase kicks off the project as members of participating communities work closely together to get food to a foodbank or shelter, or help school children with homework, for example. In regular periods, gatherings of the whole group can introduce the different teachings of the represented religious traditions about service to the community. Thus, mutual differentiation is introduced, and persons can get a deeper understanding of the other's faith tradition. Interfaith services with elements from all traditions can be tools of mutual differentiation as well as recategorization. (3) The closing phase includes a celebration of the accomplishments of the project and may involve a presentation during a gathering of the wider participating religious communities and thus emphasize recategorization and a common group identity. Participants can join the worship of other traditions as guests, present results and receive visible recognition. This phase can also involve elements of reflection during which group members can share what they have learned about the other community through their shared project.

Conclusion and Summary: Principles of a Glocal Didactic of Interreligious Encounters

It has been the goal of this study to develop a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters. The term “glocal” has its roots in the economic discourse and has become a theorem in sociology to describe the interconnection of the global and the local in the current social context of globalization. The notion of *glocalization*, the interconnectedness of global and local, of universal and particular, has been a theme I have maintained as a common thread throughout this dissertation. The term signifies that particularity does not have to be given up or suppressed for the search of universals but both principles can be affirmed and balance each other.

We experience the world as a “compressed single space” in which parts all over the world are brought closer together.⁴⁴ Globalization is a deeply uneven process along the North and South divide but also within societies, increasing the gap between the rich and the poor.⁴⁵ In many places local cultures are transformed through homogenizing processes. On the other hand, particular cultures assert themselves and maintain some diversification and hybridization of cultures.⁴⁶ The concept of *hybridization* understands culture not as fixed and static but embraces cultural mixing as a phenomenon reaching back into ancient history.⁴⁷ The related notions of hybridization and glocalization give weight to the particular as an essential dimension of globalization processes.

In the theological discourse the universal-particular-continuum has emerged as a dominant theme as well. Most helpful for the development of a glocal didactic are

⁴⁴ See Chapter 2 “Working Definition and Characteristics of Globalization”; Robertson, *Globalization*, 8.

⁴⁵ Schreiter, 7; Nederveen Pieterse, 13.

⁴⁶ Tomlinson, 69.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 2 “Hybridization”; Nederveen Pieterse, 82.

theological frameworks that hold together affirmation of the particularity of diverse traditions as well as affirmation of some universals that are found in our common humanity and interconnectedness. In my view, this is best achieved in pluralist approaches that embrace the particular and in liberationist-feminist models. Therefore, they inform my own theological foundation for a glocal didactic. Cobb's and Panikkar's approaches recognize the need to approach religious pluralism from one's particular tradition but emphasize the thrust within the core of Christian teachings to engage in relationship with the Other. Liberationist-feminist approaches underscore the particularities of the social context and gender and reach for common ground in a collaborative praxis with persons from other religious traditions in order to tend to suffering on a global and local level.

In the area of social psychology the relationship of the universal and particular surfaced in the discussion of different strategies for the facilitation of intergroup encounters. While decategorization and recategorization intend to establish connections by helping members of different outgroups to discover commonalities, proponents of mutual differentiation emphasize the importance of maintaining some particular group identity, especially for outgroup members in a minority status. Otherwise, the promotion of commonalities might result in assimilation. Therefore, I have underscored the necessity of a combined approach.⁴⁸

In the area of interreligious spiritual care I have developed the model of three concentric circles as possible places of connections between caregivers and careseekers of different traditions. The circle of common human experience emphasizes the universal

⁴⁸ See pages 161-171, Chapter 5 of this dissertation and Kenworthy et al, 282.

pole while the circles of interconnected and particular spirituality emphasize the particular pole to varying degrees. The connection of the universal and particular is expressed in the concentric nature and relation of the circles to each other: Whether the participants in the spiritual care relationship meet on the inner circle or the outer circle, they do not leave the center of the circle.⁴⁹

Finally, the metaphor of the patchwork quilt expresses the interconnectedness of the universal and particular, the global and the local. My emphasis is not so much on the product but the process of creating a quilt together that consists of very different particular and incongruous pieces. Many of them have been used as patches of healing and repair for rips in the social fabric of different local settings. The process of creating the quilt for healing and support holds the different pieces together.

Thus, the goal of a glocal didactic is it to cultivate encounters and learning processes in which members of religious communities are empowered to develop a “glocal responsibility”, an attitude, according to which persons can honor their own cultural and religious commitments *and* those of others, and see themselves as interconnected with the global human family. It is an orientation toward living in the local and the global at the same time.⁵⁰

The impulse for my search for a glocal didactic has come from German practical and ecumenical theologian Ernst Lange. In his book And Yet It Moves. Dream and Reality of the Ecumenical Movement in 1972 he proposes the development of a social ecumenical didactic, a theory and method, which makes it possible for persons to develop

⁴⁹ See Chapter 4, “The Possibility of Interreligious Prayer in the Context of Spiritual Care – Three Concentric Circles.”

⁵⁰ See pages 48-50, Chapter 2 of this dissertation. See also Tomlinson, 183.

an ecumenical and universal commitment and to participate in experiences with others while maintaining their commitments to their denominational, cultural, and social context.⁵¹ As Lange articulates, “a sense of universality, the capacity to act with a sense of responsibility towards the whole world, is rooted in the liberation of the conscience from its parochial imprisonment.”⁵²

Such a didactic needs to be *ecumenical*, because the church is irrelevant if it cannot relate itself to humankind’s increasingly urgent need for peace. The only way for the Church to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic, is being ecumenical, which Lange understands as the contemporary expression of peace, shalom.⁵³ The ecumenical didactic needs to be *social*: Not only the content of beliefs but also deeply rooted attitudes and patterns of behaviors need attention.⁵⁴ Not only doctrinal differences, but also socio-cultural psychological factors cause divisions in the life of the churches. Thus, ecumenical theology and consequently, the development of a social ecumenical didactic, need to be increasingly an interdisciplinary exercise.⁵⁵ Lange understands the social ecumenical didactic as a method of creating an atmosphere in church and society, in which individuals and communities are enabled to engage learning processes, which

⁵¹ Ulrich Becker, “Ecumenical Learning,” in Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, John Pobee, Tom Stransky, Geoffrey Wainwright, and Pauline Webb (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1991), 342.

⁵² Lange, 135.

⁵³ Ernst Lange, And Yet It Moves: Dream and Reality in the Ecumenical Movement, Trans. Edwin Robertson. English ed. abridged by Konrad Raiser and Lukas Vischer (Belfast: Christian Journals Limited, 1979), 148.

⁵⁴ Lange, 75.

⁵⁵ Lange, 127.

move them beyond their previous level of experience.⁵⁶ Before those new experiences can be integrated it needs to be assured that people are able to enter them conscientiously instead of being out from them by fear of losing their own integrity and identity.⁵⁷ A key question of the social ecumenical didactic is how Christians can grow so they can be up to the challenges of the contemporary world.⁵⁸ Lange died in 1974 and could not further develop his proposal.

The relationships with other religious traditions are not at the forefront of his reflection in 1972. Since then, the social context has become more globalized and pluralistic. I share with Lange the view that it is an essential task of the church to work as an agent for peace in the world. Today, the fulfillment of that role involves the active and open engagement of our neighbors of different religious traditions. The work of reaching out and partnering with other traditions is an expression of the faith in the realm of God.

The conflicts between different religious groups as well as the barriers toward cooperation are not only rooted in the content of beliefs. Social inequalities and power imbalances, as well as fears, stereotypes, and prejudices divide and isolate persons of different faiths from each other. The development of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters, therefore, needs to be based in an interdisciplinary discourse. This study employs resources from sociology (Chapter 2), theology (Chapter 3), pastoral theology and care (Chapter 4), and social psychology (Chapter 5 and 6). The results of the

⁵⁶ Lange, 139.

⁵⁷ Lange, 139.

⁵⁸ Werner Simpfendorfer, Ernst Lange: Versuch eines Porträts (Berlin: Wichern-Verlag, 1997), 218.

discussion of the research in these previous chapters are summarized and integrated in this concluding chapter, which outlines a theoretical basis as well as guidelines of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters. Some strategies from Intergroup Relations Programs are employed to spell out concrete methodological principles spiritual care and counseling as well as for the training of chaplains and theological students in CPE and interreligious partnership projects in the context of congregational ministry.

Conceptual and Practical Components of a Glocal Didactic

A “glocal” didactic of interreligious encounters includes a conceptual component, a theoretical foundation, and a methodological component, reflections on how that theory can be applied and be operational in clinical practice.

In the theological discourse of religious pluralism feminist and liberation theologians call for attention to social context and power dynamics. Research in the field of Intergroup Contact Theory has brought forth the need for consideration of the connection of prejudice and social context.⁵⁹ In the field of pastoral care and counseling increasingly social and systems issues have been raised. The person is not only seen as an individual but more holistically within the systems of their psychic, cultural, and social contexts.⁶⁰ Therefore, an important element of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters is a reflection on the social context. Social forces shape the experience of religious pluralism and the religiously Other (Chapter 2), are at play in power dynamics in the spiritual care relationship (Chapter 4) and in relationships of members of different

⁵⁹ Pettigrew, “The Intergroup Hypothesis Reconsidered,” 173.

⁶⁰ See sections about a multi-systems approach and a liberationist approach to intercultural spiritual care in the Chapter 4.

religious groups that encounter each other (Chapter 5). The exploration of theoretical concepts that help understand and interpret the social context of interreligious encounters is an important part of the conceptual component of interreligious encounters. The concept of deterritorialization provides a lens that helps understand the fragmentation, confusion, and fear many contemporaries feel in our increasingly globalized and pluralistic societies. The notions of glocalization and hybridization have the potential to help persons to integrate the pluralistic context they live in and depict paths to intercultural cooperation.

The theological discourse as well contributes paradigms that empower persons to embrace the religiously Other without abandoning one's own religious commitments. Cobb's differential pluralism and Panikkar's pluralist approach affirm a rootedness in the Christian tradition. It is exactly core teachings of Incarnation and Trinity that motivate persons to reach out to persons from other tradition in faith and openness. Liberationist-feminist approaches envision a glocal responsibility to tackle suffering and work together for the well-being of humans and the planet, globally as well locally. My own contribution to the discussion is an emphasis on the *encounter* itself, the relationship, as the link between persons of different traditions. Therefore it is essential to give attention not only to the patches and the quilt but also the quilting bee and how it can be facilitated. In an increasingly pluralistic social context it is important to move interreligious dialogue from the level of religious and academic leadership to the grassroots of religious communities.

A glocal didactic aims at empowering all people in their living contexts to develop a "glocal responsibility." It seems the image of the quilting bee is adequate, since

traditionally ordinary women would get together in quilting bees. The production of quilts was a community event during which stories were told and experiences exchanged. The methodological component of a glocal didactic is shaped by questions how to create and facilitate interreligious “quilting bees” in a way that prejudices and fears do not become obstacles but can be addressed and overcome.

Methodological reflections envision practical steps how the theological paradigms can be applied and made operational, how persons can be assisted to live and learn in a religiously plural society. On this basis, the paradigm of the three concentric circles conceptualizes ways of interreligious connections in spiritual care and assists spiritual caregivers to understand and develop supportive relationships with recipients from different religious traditions.

Intergroup Contact Theory contributes an understanding how to create conditions in learning contexts that ease contact between members of different outgroups as well as concrete strategies to reduce prejudice. Intergroup Contact Theory has been used successfully for over fifty years in encounters of persons of different ethnic, cultural, and racial groups. As part of the glocal didactic I apply such strategies to the context of spiritual care as well as learning processes in its supervision and in congregational settings. At first I will summarize the findings of the conceptual component.

Concepts Illuminating the Social Context

Persons experience a *loss of a sense of place* as the role of the local place in shaping identity is lessened.⁶¹ Many interactions are done in abstraction from the local place as mass media and the internet increase virtual experience and abstract from the

⁶¹ See the section on deterritorialization in Chapter 2 and Tomlinson, 106ff.

concrete local place. Individuals throughout the world are forced to migrate because of political and economic forces and are dis-placed, having to make a living in different countries with different cultures and traditions. Jobs are outsourced to places with lower wages and taxes, and persons have to move where jobs are. Technological change has accelerated intercultural connections of people, information and goods. Migration has transformed cities and neighborhoods, and persons of different cultures, ethnicities, and religious traditions live in close proximity. These developments of *detrterritorialization* contribute to a sense of powerlessness, as the local place loses influence and is transformed through the influence of more powerful forces, such as multinational corporations, and less by those who inhabit the local place. Local and particular identities are confronted with larger global and homogenizing processes, as well as relativized by other particular identities near by.

Economic pressures, cultural changes, loss of sense of place contribute to a sense of fear and cultural fragmentation. A glocal didactic has to take into consideration and begin with a *conscientization* of such social forces and the fears they may produce.⁶² Otherwise, attempts to develop a glocal responsibility end up as an ineffective moral appeal.

The reflection of social context includes the conceptualization of strategies of change as well. The sociological analysis of globalization provides conceptual tools for the integration of cultural and religious pluralism, in particular in the interrelated concepts of hybridization and glocalization.

⁶² See pages 209-214 of this chapter and Graham, 40, 47.

The paradigm of cultural *hybridization* demythologizes the idea of the “clash of civilizations” which only reinforces fears and divisions. Culture is not understood as fixed, static, and separate, but cultural mixing has deep historic roots reaching back to ancient populations. Hybridization is not a new phenomenon, but we experience the hybridization of culture that have all along have been fluid, changing, and hybrid all along.⁶³ The paradigm of hybridization can explain and normalize the experience of cultural and religious diversity and interconnections and serve as a conceptual tool helping persons to engage different cultures and religions in their neighborhoods more openly.

A similar empowering function can be seen in the paradigm of *glocalization* as it expresses the productive tension of the glocal and the local: Our sharpened awareness of the universal and global in a compressed single space causes an emphasis of the particular and local, contributing to an appreciation of diversity worldwide.⁶⁴ Particularity does not have to be given up or suppressed in the search of universals but both principles can be affirmed and balance each other. The paradigms of hybridization and glocalization translate into concepts of integration as cultural identities do not have to be given up but new commonalities and differences emerge. They offer constructive conceptual tools as they offer a roadmap for the development of a glocal responsibility encouraging persons to engage the other while affirming their own religious values and beliefs.

⁶³ See the section on “hybridization” in Chapter 3 and Nederveen Pieterse, 82.

⁶⁴ See the section on “glocalization” in Chapter 3 and Robertson, *Globalization*, 100.

Theological Paradigms

A glocal didactic of interreligious encounters seeks an interdisciplinary dialogue because the divisions and conflicts between persons and groups of different religions have roots not only in theological convictions but also in intercultural and intergroup dynamics as well as social and power differences. However, differences of belief *are* important factors contributing to divisions and isolation of religious groups from each other. For many Christians, the theologumenon of the absolute salvific significance of God's revelation in Christ and a concern about syncretism and dilution of their faith in Christ, seems to put limitations on their encounter with persons of other faiths. Many are hesitant or skeptical to engage in a local soup kitchen project or an interfaith prayer service together with a Muslim neighboring community, for example. As chaplains they may avoid visiting patients of different religious traditions or neglect the development of relationships with local synagogues, mosques, or Buddhist temples. The recognition of diverse holidays, the need for interreligious meditation and worship spaces in their institutions may not be on their radar screen. Beliefs can serve as rationalizations or reinforcement of prejudices and fears. At the same time religious beliefs and theological concepts can empower and inspire persons to move beyond their previous level of awareness and integrate new experiences.

Therefore, a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters needs a theological foundation to develop paradigms that can help religious leaders and communities to understand their faith in the context of religious pluralism and to envision new ways of being with persons of different religious traditions.

Numerous theological approaches to religious pluralism engage other religious traditions through a comparative perspective and do not provide implications for the social context where persons from different religions meet and live together. The theological perspective of a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters needs to move from a comparative analysis of religious traditions to an understanding of the *encounter* of persons who are committed to their diverse traditions. On the one hand there is no overarching meta-theory of religions. On the other hand the notion of various separate particular religious communities leads to a relativism that leaves us incapacitated in the face of urgent problems and threat that face the human community worldwide and locally. The link to the religiously Other may not be found in shared beliefs but in the relationship itself and the shared efforts to tend to suffering. This approach to religious pluralism can be best summarized in two theses: (1) Religious identity is experienced in relationship. (2) Religious identity is experienced in cooperative praxis.

Experiencing Religious Identity in Relationship. The reflections in Chapters 2 and 3 have established that a glocal didactic needs to hold the universal and particular in a creative tension. Thus, the partners of an interreligious encounter can affirm their interconnectedness and common humanity while bringing their particular beliefs to the dialogue. As a Christian I do not have to abandon my belief in Christ in order to enter the dialogue with others. I understand Christ as the center of reality. Yet, I know that I see reality through the lens of my Christian tradition.⁶⁵ Our knowledge finds its limits in the

⁶⁵ See Panikkar's *pars pro toto* effect, "Jordan, Tiber, and Ganges," 107.

mystery of God who is always beyond our understanding.⁶⁶ Our faith is a relationship to the Divine Mystery we can never completely know. As a Christian I understand my faith primarily as a living relationship and participation in my community, the church, not as agreement with a doctrinal set of beliefs. Doctrinal formulations rather serve the structuring of a living faith, a relationship with the Divine. Thus, as a Christian I can hold on to the distinctiveness of the Christian faith while respecting the distinctiveness of other traditions.⁶⁷ The symbols of Incarnation and the Trinity communicate a faith in God as related within God's self and related to humanity. Because faith is a relationship with the Divine Mystery, Christians can meet the religious neighbors in a relational stance. Common ground is found in the mutual relationship. In the religiously Other I can recognize my need to move beyond myself.⁶⁸ The interreligious relationship becomes a spiritual practice.

Experiencing Religious Identity in the Praxis of a "Glocal Responsibility".

Feminist and numerous theologians from the Southern hemisphere approach the interreligious encounter from a liberationist perspective, which has been most comprehensively articulated by Paul Knitter. Participants in interreligious dialogue do not begin with a discussion of doctrines but with a common liberative praxis.⁶⁹ Knitter centers his approach on the concern of Jesus of Nazareth with the realm of God, soteria, the well-being for all. For Knitter, the soteria is a common, yet shaky ground. The suffering, experienced in poverty, ecological destruction, victimization, and violent

⁶⁶ Knitter, No Other Name, 202.

⁶⁷ Cobb, Transforming Christianity, 59.

⁶⁸ Panikkar, Myth, Faith, and Hermeneutics, 243.

⁶⁹ Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology," 196.

conflict is a *hermeneutical kairos*, which calls the different religious traditions together to cooperate.⁷⁰ As suffering on a global scale requires the cooperation with other religions, the Christian church must concern itself with interreligious encounters for the sake of the well-being of the human family and the earth. I add that the pain caused by religious prejudice and division is a suffering that cannot leave the church indifferent. Christians are called to support religious minorities who may experience prejudice. They also need to confront their history of religious oppression in colonialism and Anti-Judaism in order to contribute to healing in interreligious relationships.

Thus, reaching within the center of Christian teachings, Christians are moved into an engaged relationship with the world. In the core teachings of the Christian faith we find the call into the relationship to the religiously Other. The cooperation with others in response to suffering, a correlational praxis of “glocal responsibility,” is a task of the Church.

A glocal didactic of interreligious encounters is not based on one grand narrative or global theology. It is rather a patchwork quilt of different particular and incongruous pieces addressing global suffering by patching holes and tears in the social fabric of local situations. The cooperation in addressing suffering together likens the communal process of making the quilt. The process is based on provisional definitions, points of interdisciplinary and interreligious collaboration.⁷¹ It begins with the concrete experiences of persons of different religious traditions. As they share their stories and come together to *share spiritual practices* and experience each others symbols and rituals

⁷⁰ Knitter, *One Earth*, 58.

⁷¹ Schreiter, 111.

they can gain an existential and relational access to the religiously Other.⁷² In grassroots level projects they *engage together in concrete actions* tending to suffering and promoting the wellness of local communities and thus the global community.⁷³

A glocal didactic does not only attend to the particularity of religious tradition but the particularity of gender and social context.⁷⁴ It takes seriously the histories of the connection of Christianity and colonialism and Anti-Judaism. It operates on the basis of the hermeneutical privilege of the underprivileged. In a context of Christian normativity, it promotes the voices of those in the minority and needs the voices of the Southern hemisphere. It promotes gender equality. Beginning with concrete experiences, it seeks to move from interreligious dialogue on a primary academic level to participation of local communities.

A glocal didactic has a global perspective, yet envisions interreligious encounters in the arena of local neighborhoods and individual and communal relationships. Major contexts of interreligious encounters are also public institutions, such as healthcare settings and prisons where chaplains are called upon to provide spiritual support to persons of different faith traditions. Thus, a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters needs to address spiritual care and counseling as well as its clinical supervision and training in these contexts. In order to move the theological principles for open engagement of the religiously Other beyond a moral appeal, now the attention shifts to methods of a glocal didactic and questions how to apply the theological paradigms. In

⁷² See Chapter 3 “Methodological Considerations”, Moyaert, 49f., Smith, Towards a World Theology, 68.

⁷³ Knitter, “Toward a Liberation Theology,” 191; and One Earth, 54.

⁷⁴ O’Neill, Women Speaking, xi; Samartha, One Christ, 2.

other words, after some exploration of the nature of the different patches and the patchwork quilt, it is just as important to give attention to the quilting bee and the process of creating a quilt together.

Interreligious Spiritual Care

As pointed out above, in order to integrate new experiences, it needs to be assured that people are really able to enter them conscientiously without of being automatically shut out from them by fear of losing their identity. People in a globalized context experience a sense of loss of place and fragmentation, which may cause them to cling more tightly to their particular identity and close themselves off from neighbors of different religious and cultural backgrounds. Openly engaging in encounters with persons who are different will challenge people to change their attitudes and assumptions. Before people can embrace change they may need to be empowered to confront their fears and experience their losses.

Social psychology has contributed an understanding of the role of anxiety in encounters between persons of different religious and cultural groups. Different groups, especially minority groups, may experience realistic threat to their physical and economic power. Religious groups may experience symbolic threat in the existence of different values, beliefs and attitudes in the religion of the neighbor. The more a group believes in the moral rightness of their particular belief, the more it perceives its values to be threatened by others. The experience of symbolic threat can be a cause of prejudice.

The process of *conscientization* can help to address such fears.⁷⁵ Fears can lose their power when they are brought out in the open. Thus, attention to the social processes of globalization and the connected loss of place, can help normalize fears of the other and fears of the potential loss of identity. An attention to the social forces and uneven power dynamics can help people to better understand the isolation and divisions they experience.

Because religion and culture are intertwined and interconnected, a concept of interreligious spiritual care utilizes models of intercultural pastoral care. Intercultural pastoral care gives significant consideration to socio-cultural analysis attending to the different languages, symbols, patterns of behavior and social relations, values, and beliefs of pastoral caregiver and careseeker. Thus, the *groundwork* of interreligious spiritual care includes the conscientization of systemic structures, which make up the larger social context of the interreligious relationship. It is important that the spiritual caregiver develops an awareness of power structures in which both partners of the pastoral relationships participate.⁷⁶ Especially for those in the privileged position, asymmetric power dynamics remain often unconscious, such as ‘whiteness’ or Christian normativity. Such an awareness can prevent spiritual care givers to domesticate conflicts, define away distinctions, in order to avoid the discomfort of difference.

It is the *aim* of interreligious spiritual care to empower the person seeking care to discover and utilize their own spiritual resources to cope with and to transform the suffering with which they are confronted. Liberationist and feminist pastoral care

⁷⁵ Graham, 40, 47.

⁷⁶ Poling, “Wahrnehmung”, 69.

concepts highlight the active participation of the careseeker in the spiritual care encounter.⁷⁷ He or she is not understood as a mere recipient of care or a person with needs and problems but also as a person with inherent resources and agency. It is important that the recipients of spiritual care can express their understanding of their needs as well as their resources on their own terms. As the cultural and religious worlds of both partners in the spiritual care encounter find a voice, they interconnect without any one being taken over by a particular dogmatic or psychotherapeutic model.⁷⁸

The *stance* toward the interreligious encounter is characterized by respect for the universal and the particular, commonalities as well as differences between the persons offering and receiving spiritual care and counseling. This respectful stance is summarized in three attitudes: (1) We are like all others: Persons share a common humanity. (2) We are like some others: There are cultural characteristic ways of knowing, interpreting and being in the world. (3) We are like no other: Persons are individuals with a particular make-up that is unique.⁷⁹

The figure of the three concentric circles of interreligious interaction is a tool that helps persons to translate the dialectic relationship of the universal and particular in the interreligious encounter.

Persons of different faiths can connect in the outer *circle of common human experience* because the experience of suffering, such as illness and death, is universal. The strategies of *decategorization* and *cross-categorization* from intergroup relations

⁷⁷ Riedel-Pfäfflin and Strecker, 34.

⁷⁸ Hauschildt, 249.

⁷⁹ For example Lartey, 171-75.

theory can provide tools for spiritual caregivers to connect to careseekers from another religious tradition, as they de-emphasize religious boundaries and cross through religious particularities to connect with the other as persons.⁸⁰ Chaplains can move beyond their particular tradition in order to help patients and families to find their own spiritual resources to cope with suffering. On a social level, globally as well as locally, communities are faced with issues of poverty, lack of housing and health care, educational resources, or environmental problems. Congregations and communities of different religious traditions can connect and address those problems together more effectively than alone. Food banks, homework assistance, peace vigils and social advocacy are only a few examples of efforts that are organized and facilitated in interfaith collaboration.

The circle of *interconnected spiritual practice* connects persons not only with regard to their common humanity but also interconnects them in their particularity. The concept of *mutual differentiation* from the field of intergroup relations theory counterbalances the concepts of de- and cross-categorization.⁸¹ It corresponds to the two inner concentric circles by emphasizing particularity and difference and helps spiritual caregivers to perceive and attend to the particular religious resources and needs of those who seek spiritual support. Attention to different beliefs and symbolic expressions call for a flexibility in the use of spiritual resources, which may include verbal as well as non-verbal ways of communication, such as particular rituals. Effective spiritual care may mean the utilization of particular spiritual resources from the tradition of the careseeker.

⁸⁰ Miller and Brewer, "Categorization Effects," 213.

⁸¹ Hewstone and Brown, "Contact," 30.

For example, an interfaith prayer at the bedside of a Jewish patient may be most supportive when including the Mi Sheberakh, a healing prayer from the Jewish tradition, as familiar words provide comfort and grounding in a time of crisis.⁸² Shared interfaith worship in local communities, can provide a relational and existential access to the stories and symbols that are meaningful to a neighboring religious community. Participants do not only cognitively gain information about another religion but enter it to some degree and connect emotionally and spiritually. The experience of another religious practice may enrich their and deepen their own faith and spiritual practice. It may also make them aware of differences and distinctions.

The circle of *particular spiritual practice* represents the core of the liturgical life of a community. At times spiritual caregivers move into the particular core of a tradition in order to support the person in crisis. At times, spiritual caregivers need to reach out and utilize spiritual caregivers from another tradition in order to provide spiritual support most effectively. The acknowledgement of particularities and differences has an important function, as it maintains and protects the boundaries of religious communities. Spiritual care givers need to recognize their limitations and cultivate and nurture relationships with religious communities and leaders in order to be able to work as a *resource agent* who makes particular religious support in crisis situations available. Especially in the context of Christian normativity or Western approaches to spiritual care, caregivers need to allow space for careseekers from other religious and cultural traditions to express their particular religious needs and resources, as those can easily be overlooked and neglected.

⁸² Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), Rabbi's Manual (New York: CCAR Press, 1988, Reprint, 2002), 195-196.

A glocal didactic of interreligious encounters thus includes some tools for interfaith spiritual caregivers to support persons from different religious traditions in crisis situations. It has been argued above that many global and local social problems require that religious communities work together to respond to such problems. In addition, discrimination and prejudice based on religion represent an injustice and cause a suffering that need to be overcome. Therefore, a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters seeks to create shared experiences in training settings for ministry as well as religious communities, which enable persons of different religious groups to come together, overcome their prejudices by working together and learning from each other.

Interreligious Groups in Contact

Chapter 5 has demonstrated that the Intergroup Contact Theory can be applied to the context of Clinical Pastoral Education as well as Interreligious Action Projects. Both settings can be fertile ground for prejudice reduction through intergroup contact. They provide facilitating conditions for the lessening of stereotypes, if they have *institutional support*, by facilitating *equal status* of religious minority and majority groups within the contact situation, by fostering *cooperation* toward *common goals*, and by creating possibilities for the development of *friendly bonds*.

Social Identity Theory has provided additional strategies for stereotype reduction in intergroup encounters. The combined use of the strategies of *de-categorization*, *cross-categorization*, *mutual differentiation*, and *recategorization* helps the group facilitator to create a sense of safety, to engage intergroup conflict constructively and provide opportunities to overcome stereotypes of the outgroup beyond the particular group

experience. *Decategorization* and *cross-categorization* de-emphasize religious differences and provide opportunities to get to know other group members as persons first. Group members can discover commonalities and similarities. Both strategies should be utilized at the beginning of the group experience. They are balanced by *mutual differentiation*. In order to challenge prejudice in a lasting way beyond the context of the particular group experience, group members should be encouraged to express their differences, so they can experience each other not just as likeable individuals but representatives of the outgroups. During these group phases facilitators should monitor intergroup anxiety and normalize the open acknowledgement of fears.

Recategorization is emphasized in collaborative projects in which the group members work toward common goals and can experience a sense of “we,” a shared group identity.⁸³

Implications for the facilitation of CPE training programs include the addition of topics related to religious pluralism, cultural and social identity to the curriculum for Level 1, Level 2, and Supervisory CPE. The peer group encounters as well as the participation in and shared preparation of interfaith services provides experiential avenues to different religious traditions. Working with culturally and religiously diverse groups it is important that supervision is clearly focused on education and not understood as therapy. Group supervision should include Law’s principle of ethno-relative facilitation as well as the monitoring of anxiety, as high anxiety increases the reliance on stereotypes.⁸⁴ Issues of personal and social identity need to be balanced.

⁸³ Dovidio et al., “Reducing Contemporary Prejudice,” 153.

⁸⁴ Law, 35.

So far, this chapter has presented theoretical considerations as well as practical implications for a glocal didactic of interreligious encounters, describing learning settings where participants can discover their commonalities as well as affirm their particular religious identities and together develop a patchwork quilt of patches that support healing in of tears and holes in the social fabric and in that process get to know and learn from each other. The concluding section explores further research for the development of a glocal didactic.

Recommendations for Further Research - Religion and Intergroup Relations

In Chapter 3 it has been demonstrated that the literature of interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism primarily deals with the content of beliefs. Some approaches develop concepts for dialogical dialogue or point to ways of interreligious cooperation when confronting global suffering. However, little reflection has been done regarding social factors, interpersonal and intergroup dynamics between different religious communities affect or prevent dialogue and cooperation. In addition, the research about the relationship of religion and intergroup conflict is limited and shall be introduced briefly below.⁸⁵ Much of the research has focused on the possible connection of prejudice and the way persons believe. More recently, religious institutions are seen as possible settings that can help persons to develop compassion and tolerance for others. Thus, the teachings about tolerance in different religious traditions need to be considered, which points to possible interdisciplinary collaboration between social psychologists and theologians. Consequently, further research is needed in the cross-section of theology and

⁸⁵ For significant literature in this area see C. Daniel Batson and E. L. Stocks, "Religion and Prejudice," In Dovidio, Glick, and Rudman, 413-47. See especially 426-427.

the social sciences, for the purpose of this work, theology and intergroup relations theory. A brief review of research that has been conducted so far provides the basis on which to formulate the direction of further research.

Religion and Prejudice.

Allport describes the relationship of religion to prejudice as paradoxical: “It makes prejudice and it unmakes prejudice.”⁸⁶ He distinguishes between ethnocentric and universalistic religious values and concludes that religious beliefs can serve as rationalizations of prejudice as well as help persons overcome prejudice by teaching compassion and tolerance.⁸⁷ Allport was primarily interested in the *way* individuals practice their religion and distinguished between extrinsic and intrinsic religion. Extrinsic religion involves using one’s religion as a means to gain social status and personal security, while intrinsic religion involves pursuing one’s religion as an end in itself. Allport’s research has been further developed by C. Daniel Batson, who introduced a third category and distinguished three types: religion as a means (extrinsic), religion as an end (intrinsic) and religion as a quest.⁸⁸ The latter type represents religion as a way of facing issues of mortality and meaning in life acknowledging that the final truth may never be known.⁸⁹ Batson contends that more than three ways to categorize the practice of religion are possible. When assessing the relation between different ways of practicing religion and prejudice, Batson distinguishes also between proscribed prejudices, those

⁸⁶ Allport, 413.

⁸⁷ Allport, 456.

⁸⁸ Batson and Stocks, 417.

⁸⁹ Batson and Stocks, 417.

explicitly opposed by one's religion and nonproscribed prejudices that are endorsed, such as negative attitudes toward gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons on the part of numerous churches in the United States, for example. Empirical studies have established a relationship between prejudice and religion, which Batson et al describe as follows:

The extrinsic means dimension is related to increased prejudice, but only when prejudice is proscribed. The quest dimension is related to decreased prejudice, both proscribed and not. The intrinsic, end dimension is related to the appearance of relatively low proscribed prejudice, but only the appearance. It is related to increased prejudice when the prejudice is not proscribed by the religious community.⁹⁰

Batson's research supports the thesis that the relationship between religion and prejudice is directed by whether prejudice or tolerance is embedded in religious norms and beliefs.

Lynne Jackson and Bruce Hunsberger have suggested that intergroup analysis is a helpful tool to account for the relationship between religion and prejudice.⁹¹ They have studied attitudes of religious persons (fundamentalist Christians and Christians who endorse the main Christian tenets) toward members of other faiths and non-religious persons and vice versa. They have found considerable evidence of prejudice against outgroup members who represent a different religious orientation. The prejudice is expressed not only ingroup favoritism but also outgroup degradation. Jackson and Hunsberger see in the different types of personal religiosity put forth by Allport and Batson insufficient explanations for these findings and conclude that dynamics that occur at a group level create prejudice. Religious groups function according to the same

⁹⁰ C. Daniel Batson, Patricia Schoenrade, and Larry W. Ventis, Religion and the Individual: A Social-Psychological Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 329.

⁹¹ Lynne M. Jackson and Bruce Hunsberger, "An Intergroup Perspective on Religion and Prejudice," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 38, no. 4 (1999) : 509.

principles as cultural or other groups: The identification with an ingroup as well as stereotypical perception of outgroup members may stabilize self esteem and meet needs for social identity.⁹² Thus religious intergroup relations are no different from any other forms of intergroup relations. Jackson and Hunsberger challenge religious and non-religious persons alike to test any beliefs of ingroup superiority that may perpetuate religious based prejudice.⁹³

Further Research in the Cross-section of Intergroup Relations and Theology.

As pointed out in Chapter 2, as diverse cultures and belief systems live side by side in a compressed space and national boundaries are less significant, religion may be a powerful source for some to establish social identity and belonging. When they cling to their ingroup identity, group members tend to distort perceptions to see ingroup members as closer to themselves than outgroup persons. In situations of intergroup conflict such distorted perceptions can increase one's certainty about the correctness about one's belief.⁹⁴ Thus, an Intergroup Relations perspective may contribute to an understanding of growing fundamentalism and religious conflict. Batson and Stocks see a direction of future research in the analysis of the relationship of *specific religious teachings* and prejudices of devout believers.⁹⁵ For example, the internalization of teachings of compassion and universalism may unmake prejudice, while teachings of a special status of being saved or elected can be used to justify outgroup prejudice. Allport was

⁹² Jackson and Hunsberger, 511, 519.

⁹³ Jackson and Hunsberger, 521.

⁹⁴ Miller and Brewer, "Categorization Effects," 224.

⁹⁵ Batson and Stocks, 423.

concerned with *how* a person believes, Batson and Stocks recommend that future research should consider as well *what* persons believe.⁹⁶ As the theological discourse of religious pluralism needs to integrate intergroup perspectives, social psychologists call for research connecting intergroup relations and theology, thus closing the circle. Batson and Stocks draw attention to religious institutions not as causes of conflict and prejudice but as possible contributors to solutions. They encourage the development of programs in religious settings to reduce prejudice. The path they envision begins by getting to know religious teachings that promote tolerance and compassion, helping religious institutions to focus on such teachings and to encourage persons to use their religion in such a way.⁹⁷ They see the potential in such combination of action and personal transformation that religion can unmake prejudice. A glocal didactic could be further developed in close cooperation of theologians with social psychologists in such projects. The areas of exploration at this cross-section of theology and social psychology would be how theologies that actively engage and cooperate with the religiously other can be utilized in the development of religious programs for the reduction of religious prejudice.

Stephan recommends further research of Intergroup Relations Programs. He names specifically the need to develop evaluation of the effectiveness of intergroup education programs.⁹⁸ As this study focuses on the application of concepts of intergroup

⁹⁶ Batson and Stocks, 417.

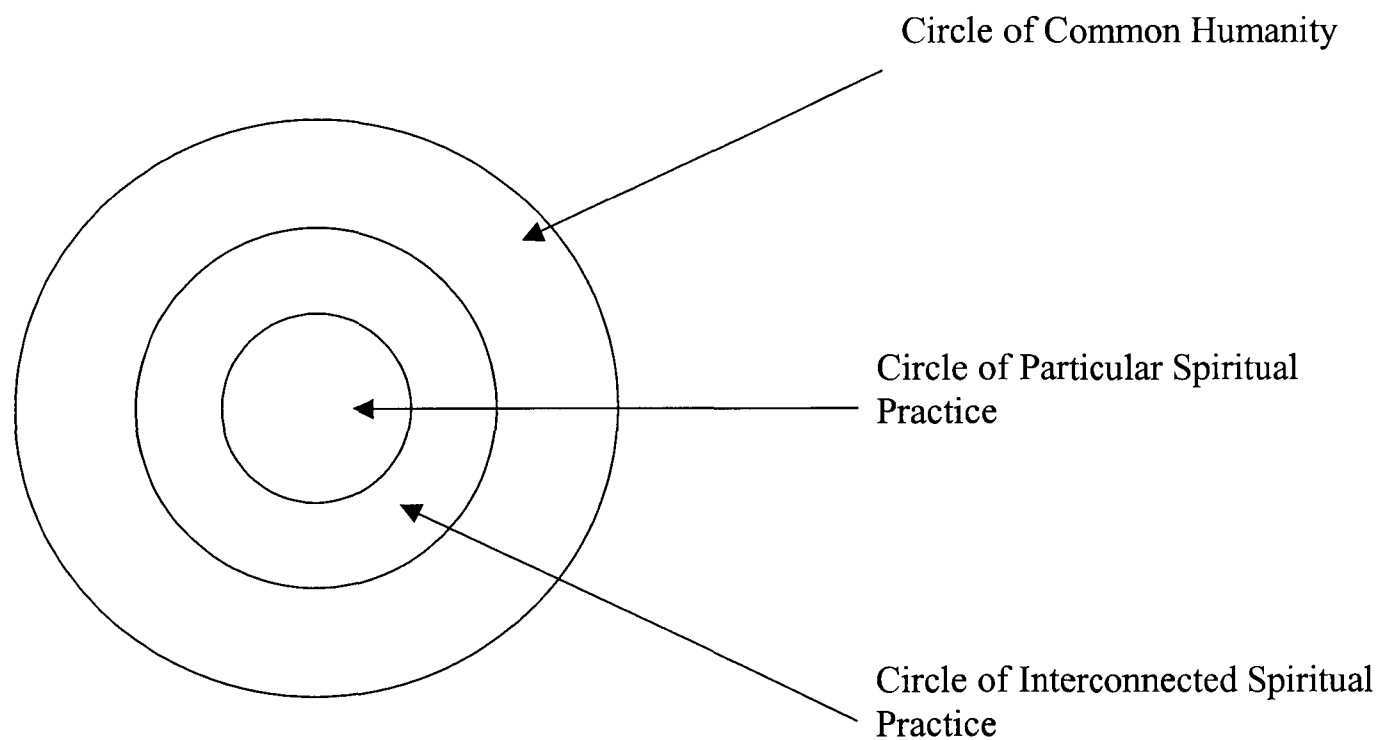
⁹⁷ Batson and Stocks, 425.

⁹⁸ The body of literature on intergroup dialogue groups is still emerging, but qualitative and quantitative studies establish that intergroup dialogues have been successful in offering participants new ways to engage meaningfully with others from different backgrounds. Nagda and Derr, 150; Cookie W. Stephan, Lausanne Renfro, and Walter G. Stephan, "The Evaluation of Multicultural Education Programs:

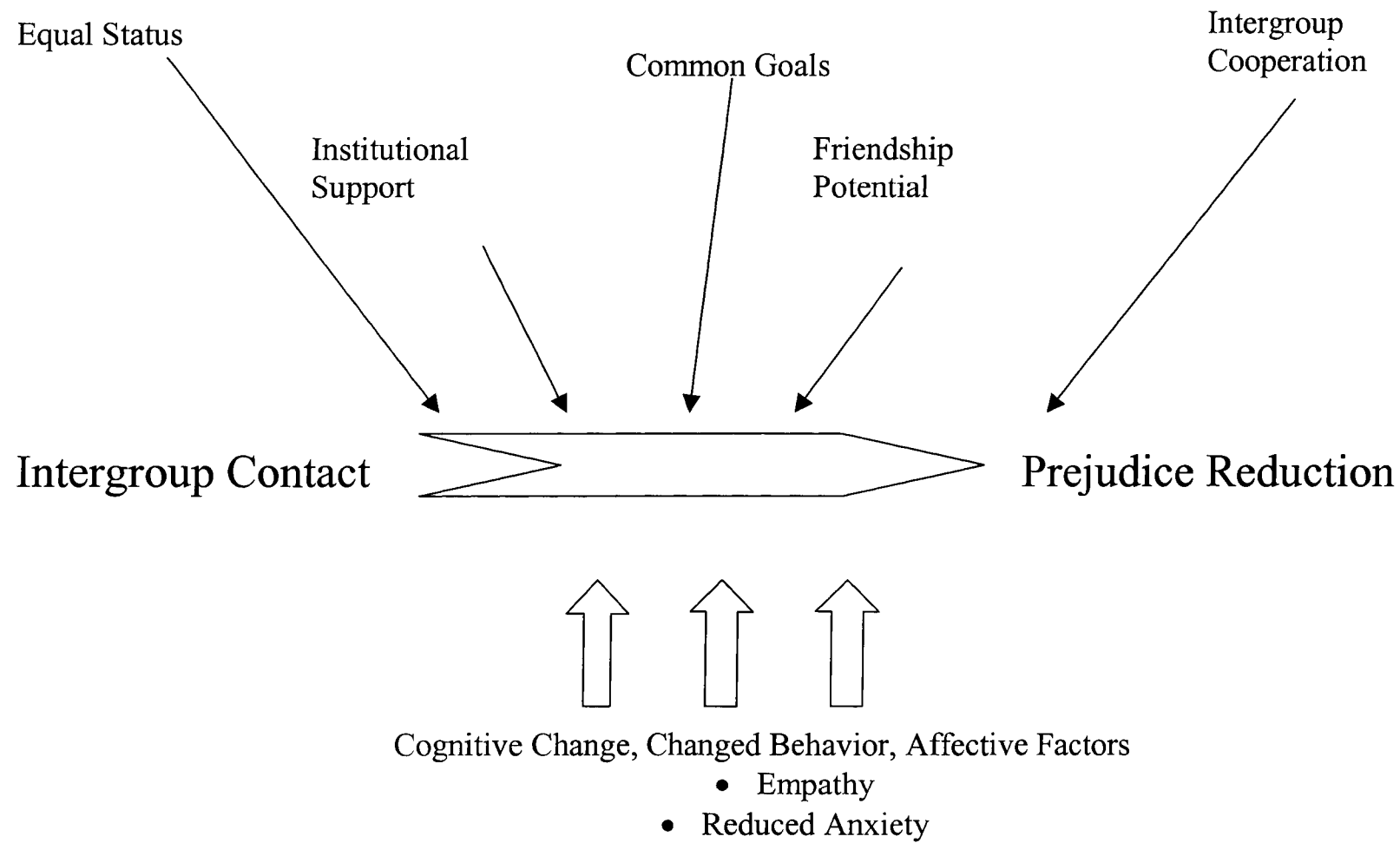
contact theory to interreligious encounters and providing theological educators with tools and guidelines, quantitative or qualitative research is not part of this study. However, such empirical studies evaluating the practice of interreligious education programs would be an additional important area of future research.

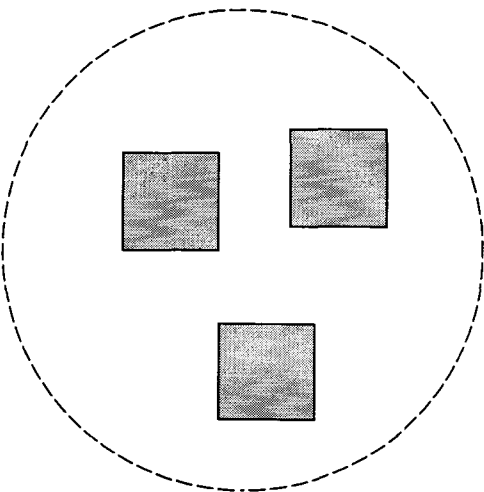
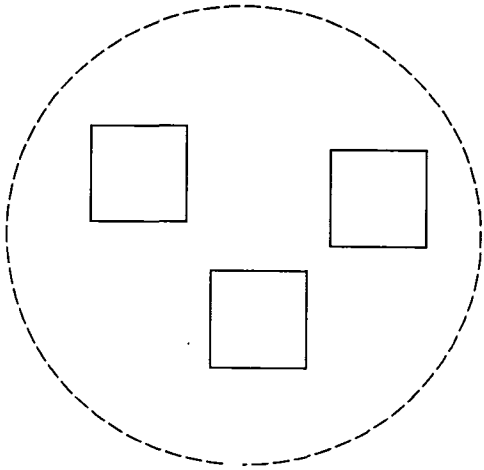
Techniques and a Meta-Analysis,” in Stephan and Vogt, 227-42, provide some methodological steps for such evaluations.

Appendix A: Concentric Circles of Interreligious Spiritual Care



Appendix B: Prejudice Reduction through Intergroup Contact

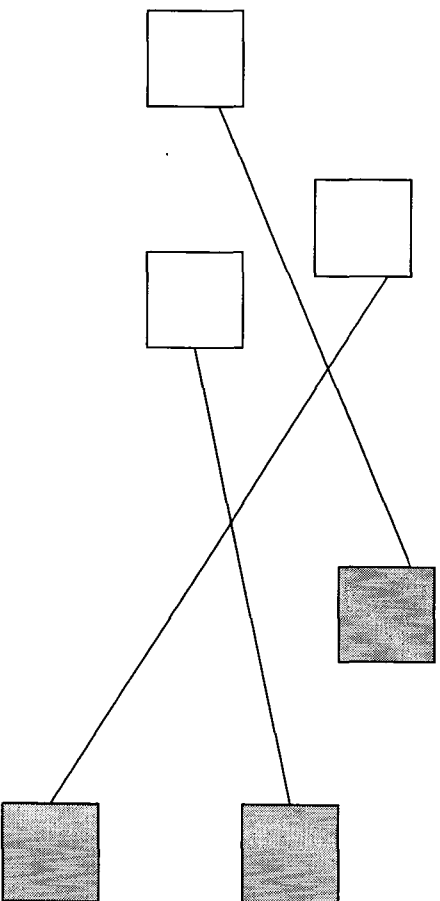


Appendix C: Groups before Contact

Perforated lines indicate group boundaries.

Appendix D

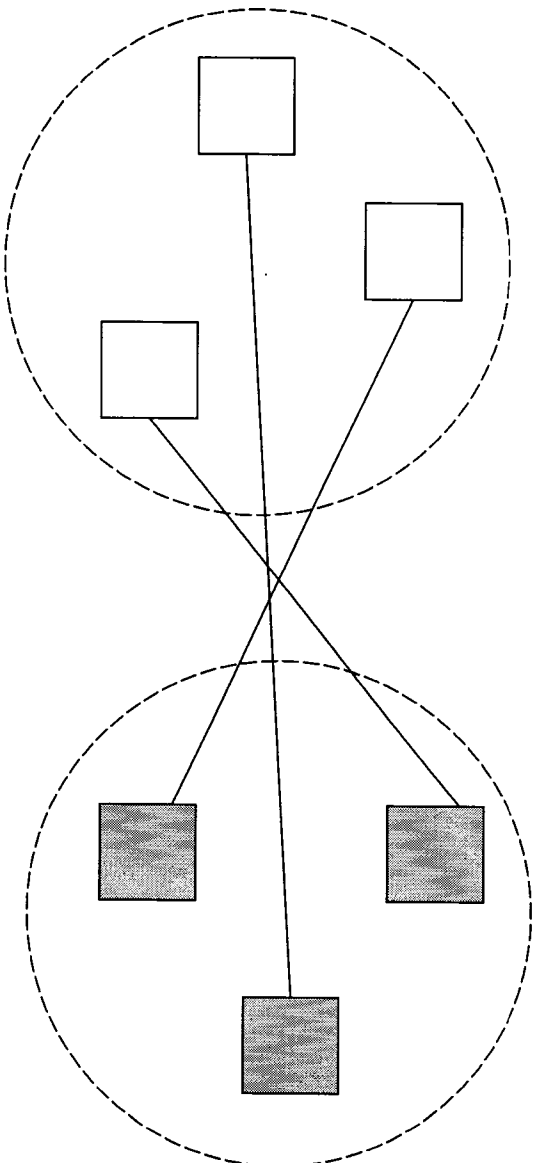
Decategorization



Personalized contact allows for differentiation and de-emphasizes group boundaries.

Appendix E

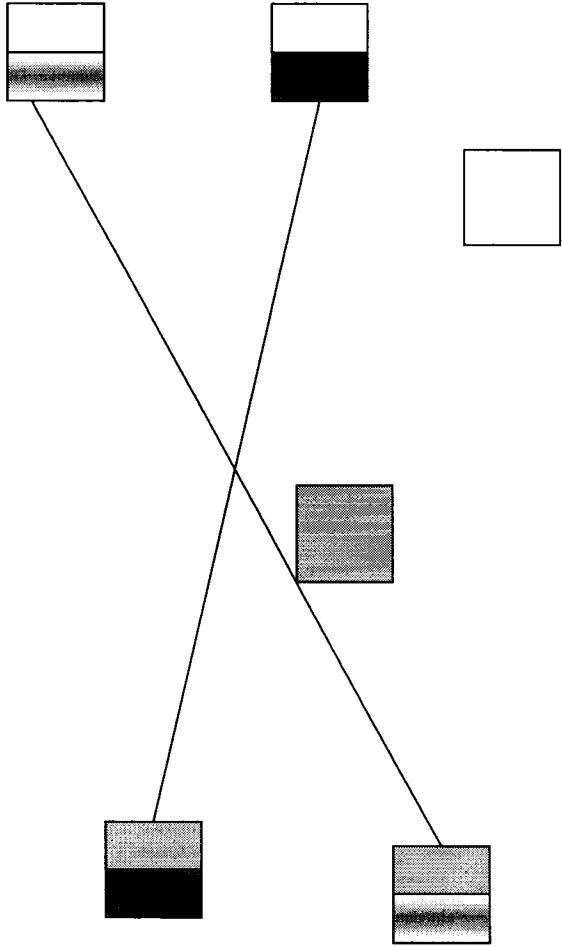
Mutual Differentiation



Contact is personalized while group boundaries are maintained.

Appendix F

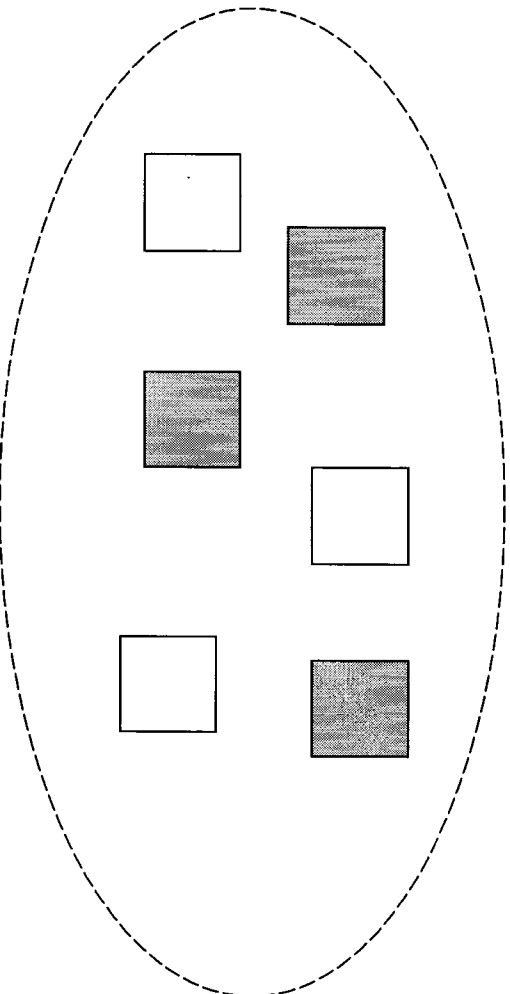
Cross-Categorization



Personalized contact allows for overlapping categories and de-emphasizes group boundaries.

Appendix G

Recategorization



Common group identity overcomes old group boundaries.

Appendix H : Facilitation of Interreligious Encounters in Groups- Phases and Methodological Steps

Phase	Intergroup Contact Facilitating Conditions	Strategies/Methods	Application in CPE Context	Application in Religious Community Cooperative
Structuring of Group/Project	Group experience is structured over an extended period of time. Group size allows for the development of friendly bonds.		CPE Unit consists of 400 supervised clinical hours.	Needs assessment in local community for service project
			Peer group does not extend beyond 8 members.	Group should not extend beyond 10 members or be divided into teams.
	Institutional Support		ACPE Code of Ethics and institutional policies express respect for diversity.	Project is supported by local and regional governing bodies of religious communities involved.
Beginning Phase		Decategorization and Cross-Categorization	Group building exercises; sharing personal stories; Discover commonalities	Shared meals; participants get to know each other personally and discover commonalities
		Reducing anxiety – creating a safe space	Development of group rules and communication skills (active listening and confidentiality); Development of learning contracts; Expression of fears normalized and encouraged.	Introduction of communication skills (active listening);
	Common Goal	Recategorization	1 week orientation to CPE and hospital – group identity begins to develop	Shared development of project goal; develop a project name

Phase	Intergroup Contact Facilitating Conditions	Strategies/Methods	Application in CPE Context	Application in Religious Community Cooperative
Working Phase	Cooperation	Perspective –Taking	Students share projects in clinical care; Shared leadership of interfaith spiritual reflection	Tasks are shared with equal representation
		Mutual Differentiation	Differences and particular religious identities are acknowledged; Students teach each other about their cultural and faith traditions; Interfaith spiritual reflection Discussion of concepts of social identity and “isms”, religious pluralism and the students’ experiences with these	Teaching introduced about the faith tradition of participants and their approach to service; Shared interfaith service; Presentation of ethnic foods
			Conflicts involving group members are actively engaged and worked through	Conflicts involving group members are actively engaged and worked through
Closing Phase		Recategorization	Final evaluation; shared processing what group members have learned about other religious traditions	Reflection on what participants have learned about each other
		Group Affirmation		Celebration and presentation of results to both participating religious community

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